



PUNCH

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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Charivaria

ROME radio recently broadcast a talk on coastal erosion. But this was not exclusively blamed for the shrinkage of the Italian Empire.

MUSSOLINI recently stated that he is still the Protector of Islam. Distance no object.

Orders have been issued in Italy that every Italian must stand to attention when the German National Anthem is played. So far no action has been taken by the Gestapo against Italians who stand to attention when the Italian National Anthem is played.



A novelist says he wrote his last book on a seat in Hyde Park. Lord BEAVERBROOK's appeal to save paper is having far-reaching effects.

A correspondent says a car he drove just after the Boer War is now valuable as a museum-piece. Just after this war it should have an even greater value as a car.

In Switzerland recently there was a Boy Scout rally. Were the Swiss authorities wise in allowing this? GOEBBELS may complain of provocative massing of troops on the frontier.



A scientist states that it has been proved that rain can be artificially produced. Our method is to lose the last bus home in the black-out.

A correspondent wants to know at approximately what time in the morning the afternoon editions of the evening papers can be properly regarded as salvage.

Mr. BERNARD SHAW has stated in a weekly paper what he would do if he were Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL. We know what Mr. CHURCHILL would do if he were Mr. SHAW — he would have to give up cigars.

Berlin radio recently said that German soldiers in Russia were in good spirits. But there is probably no truth in the story that the FUEHRER on a recent visit to the front was snowballed by a group of laughing privates.



It's Warmer Inside.

"11 a.m. — THE FIERY FURNACE.
ALL WELCOME."
Church Announcement.

This Week's Combination

"CARETAKER wanted for St. James's School, Cowley; could be combined with churchyard and heating apparatus."
Advt. in Local Paper.

At a war conference called by HITLER one of his generals was unable to attend. But it didn't matter. At any conference called by the FUEHRER he is a quorum.

It is rumoured in Rome that HITLER will shortly confer on the DUCE a high Italian decoration.

Where Did That One Come From?

"I ONLY know it's a very well-known quotation," I said. "Autolycus," he suggested.

"Autolycus your grandmother's foot," I said, or words to that effect.

"I think it is. I played that part a long time ago."

"Where?"

"In aid of a church bazaar."

"Well, how does it go on then?"

"Pack clouds away and something day

Some something something sorrow."

"Several of the words sound familiar," I agreed.

"Wait a moment and I shall get it. 'Pack clouds away and hail the day, Some something . . .'"

"Pack up your fardels in your old kit-bag," I said rudely. "I don't believe it's Shakespeare at all."

"I think it is. Autolycus was always singing things."

I sat down and read *A Winter's Tale*.

It wasn't there.

"Why don't you try the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*?" he asked.

I opened the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* at page 1.

"Try the index," he said. "Under 'clouds.'"

"That's not the way I tackle a big book. When I read I read."

The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* is not only a big book. It is a grand book. Apart from quoting nearly all Shakespeare and Milton and Wordsworth and Kipling and so much of the Bible that if it wasn't published by the Oxford University Press there would be an infringement of copyright, there are dozens of those familiar quotations that are on the lips of every after-dinner (or after-lunch) speaker, like Chaucer's

*"Of nyce conscience took he no keep
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond,"*

or on the lips of every Parliamentary orator, like Gerard Manley Hopkins'

*"Some candle clear burns somewhere I came by
I muse at how its being puts blissful back
With yellowy moisture mild night's blear-all black
Or to-fro tender trambeams trickle at the eye."*

But even more familiar and frivolous citations are not

SIRENS . . .

ONE never knows where the attack will fall, but when it does it is bound to mean that more people need the immediate help of food, clothing, money, hospital treatment and the wherewithal to carry on. *Punch*, through its COMFORTS FUND, endeavours to be a good neighbour to them all.

Will you please help us in the good work? We would be so grateful if you could send a contribution, however small. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

neglected in this work. There is "Gilbert, the Filbert, The Colonel of the Knuts," by Mr. Arthur Wimperis, and "Twiggy-voo, my boys, twiggy-voo," from "Twiggy-Voo," by Richard Morton, and "Well, if you knows of a better 'ole, go to it," which might be quoted by the mere man in the street.

But there was nothing about packing clouds away.

"It's very funny," I said, "because Mr. Bernard Darwin was one of the compilers. It tells you so at the beginning."

"He only did the Dickens."

"All the same I think there's a lack of co-ordination somewhere."

"Another of these bottle-necks, I dare say."

"But the book weighs about three pounds. Exactly as much as an ordinary man's brains. He oughtn't to have used a very well-known quotation for a title of his own without seeing that the other fellows got it into the *Dictionary*."

"Why not read Bernard Darwin's book? You might find a clue in that."

So I read *Pack Clouds Away*. This again is a fine book. Mr. Darwin seems to like all the things I like myself. He likes the books that won his heart when he was much, much younger, and he is jealous of admitting any book written later to their friendly company. I should think he knows *The Wrong Box* by heart. There is only one quotation from *The Wrong Box* in the *O.D.O.Q.* He knows that *The Wrecker* is one of the least-read best books in the world. There is no quotation from *The Wrecker* in the *O.D.O.Q.* I could have given them at least four ounces. Mr. Darwin likes dogs but is not afraid to say that he doesn't like attending to their toilet. He likes crime and detective stories; each best man likes these. And how is this from a chapter about children? :

"My sister and I certainly had great cricket matches with . . . eleven innings apiece as if we were a whole team. My eleven consisted for some obscure reason of chess players. It is a game I have never played, but I used to read about the tournaments in *The Times* . . . Their names had a fine outlandish interest regarded as humorous and it was my part to bat or bowl in character, also I blush to say humorous, for each one of them. Steinitz and Zukertort, Tarrasch and Tschigorin, Bardleben, Van Vliet, Lasker, Janowski. I believe I could write down that eleven in batting order to-day and could even give an impersonation of Dr. Tarrasch, who was supposed to have a particularly fly-away, head-over-heels action as a bowler."

That seems to bring back some queer old memories. There are very good chapters also on clothes, on food, on great shades of the past, and on Salonica, as the author saw that theatre of operations during the last war. It is hardly necessary to say that he improved the already magnificent scenery by making a golf-course there. But there is not very much about golf in *Pack Clouds Away*. There is everything (including the dust-cover) to justify the title except an honest straightforward statement about where the title comes from. I met the man whom I had asked about it before and he said with some scorn that he had found it for me. "Thomas Heywood," he said. "'Pack clouds away! and welcome day! With night we banish sorrow.'"

"Good heavens! I've heard it sung right through after



HIS WINNING WAY

"I want you, I need you,
There's such a lot to do,
I gonna make you help me
Weekdays and Sundays too—oo—oo."



"Now, if the lady's 'usband was to 'ave an ol' suit an' overcoat an' a pair o' boots an' p'r'aps an ol' 'at—I 'ave 'ere me card o' clothin' coupons wot I ain't got a lot o' use for."

a City banquet; I told you it was a frightfully well-known quotation."

"It is. It's in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*."

I looked for Thomas Heywood in the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. He wasn't there. I found simply:

"JOHN HEYWOOD
1497?-1580?"

"All a green willow;
All a green willow is my garland.
The Green Willow."

"You might think even John had never existed at all," I said, "or only in a very rudimentary manner. I don't think much of this Oxford Group."

He pointed out that Bernard Darwin had been at Cambridge, and so at the present time was Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. All the same, after much toil and much pleasure I suffer from a slight sense of injustice, though no doubt it is nothing compared with what many writers are bound to endure in these hard days.

"*O passi graviora, dabit deus his quoque finem*" (Virgil).
"The knowledge of the ancient languages is mainly a luxury" (John Bright). "Sing birds in every furrow" (Heywood, Tom).
EVOE.

Latinity

BLANK the comedian is twice as glib
As all the other actors who ad lib.
Strange verb! But oh, the far more strange applause!
To me it seems that he ad libs ad naus.

Things That Might Have Been Better Expressed

"Deception has been widely practised in the Western Desert. One of its most successful practitioners is a British brigadier who once managed the Calcutta sweepstakes."—*Daily Paper*.

Gratitude

"IS there anything I can do for you, Miss Boll-Wheel?"

"Frankly, Miss Clarence, there is. The Headmistress's Report has got to be sandwiched in between 'There'll Always Be An England,' by the School Choir; and the address by Sir Pentonville Lambart-Lambart—and I am in difficulties. Sit down, Miss Clarence, and I'll read you what I've written, and I want you to be *absolutely* frank. What I feel is, that one must *not* make it too long, and one must *not* make it too short."

"There, Miss Boll-Wheel, if you'll allow me to say so, I think you're definitely quite right. I mean, *definitely*."

"Thank you, Miss Clarence, thank you so much. I knew you'd be a help. Thank—Come in! Or perhaps you'd most kindly—Thank you, Miss Clarence, so much—'My Lord Bishop, Sir Pentonville Lambart-Lambart, ladies and gentlemen, and staff and pupils of St. Foggarty's now evacuated to the West Country and sharing with another school—' Yes, Miss Clarence?"

"Jasmine Jarvis, Matron is now practically certain, isn't measles at all. Simply a bad cold."

"I'm most thankful. Mrs. Jarvis is really quite the most tiresome of all our mothers. If possible. 'My Lord Bishop, Sir Pentonville Lambart-Lambart'—I wondered if one could leave out the second Lambart and so save a little time—but perhaps better not. Well, and so on and so on, and then the scholastic record, which one really feels is better than it has ever been, and the wonderful performance of the hockey team, and our lacrosse victory—Yes, Miss Clarence?"

"The results of the music examinations, although they haven't been quite up to our usual level—?"

"Quite right, Miss Clarence. Absolutely right. Never *shirk*, as I always say to the children. I propose to deal very briefly with the music results and say quite simply that the evacuation didn't really give them a chance. And the same with art. Domestic science I shall ignore altogether."

"Next term, Miss Boll-Wheel, things will have settled down. The evacuation—"

"Indeed, yes. Ah, the telephone. I always say it's only a mixed blessing, after all—Yes? Miss Boll-Wheel speaking. Yes? Commander Poyle? . . . How kind—how very kind! Yes, most acceptable indeed. Thank you. So many thanks. Thank you so very much. I hope so. Of course, having to evacuate the school down here has been rather . . . Yes, as you say. Thank you so much. Good-bye, Commander Poyle, and thank you again. . . . Miss Clarence, the Commander is lending us some palms in pots for the platform this afternoon. I must mention them, I think, in my Report. Where had I got to?"

"Domestic science, Miss Boll-Wheel. You were just about to omit it altogether, I think."

"Quite. Owing to the evacuation. Well, now, the point is that one would like to express one's gratitude to all those who have done so much towards making the evacuation a success."

"I shall never forget the Railway Company, Miss Boll-Wheel, nor the muddle we had over Mary Swindell's luggage and the linen-hamper."

"Very likely not, but the Railway Company is *not*, thank heaven, amongst our parents and we may very well let the whole thing drop. On the other hand, I've naturally had to mention the School Managers, and the Principal and Staff of Grote Grange—since we *are* here—though between ourselves, Miss Clarence, their attitude concerning

the use of the second-floor bathrooms and the Reference Library has never been what I call really co-operative."

"I quite agree. Have you thought about the attendant at the swimming-bath?"

"I have specifically referred to him, and to the boy who cleans the boots, and I've said that we must on no account forget the kindness of the Chaplain. But the question is, have I forgotten anyone?"

"The domestic staff?"

"Thank you, Miss Clarence, thank you so much, but practically every one of them has given notice, except the little girl with the squint, who is under strong suspicion of dishonesty. I feel one had better leave them out, perhaps. Now, if I might ask you to listen:

"My Lord Bishop, Sir Pentonville Lambart-Lambart, ladies and gentlemen, and staff and pupils of St. Foggarty's, now evac— Was that—?"

"Someone at the door, I'm afraid, Miss Boll-Wheel."

"Perhaps you would be so very kind . . . 'now evacuated to the West Country and sharing with another school—' Yes?"

"Lady Flagge is here to give away the prizes."

"Good heavens, Miss Clarence, I'd forgotten that I ought to say something about thanking her. Now the only question is this: Shall I thank her *before* I thank the Bishop and *after* thanking the Principal of Grote Grange, or sandwich her in between the School Managers and the Fire Brigade, who did such wonderful service when the lights fused?"

"I think, Miss Boll-Wheel, that if I may say so I should put her in right at the end—even after Commander Poyle's palms—because I'm afraid there's one thing that's perhaps slipped your memory."

"Thanking the Head Girl, Miss Clarence? Or the Undermatron? Or some little reference to the sweep? I really think I've remembered them all—"

"I'm so terribly sorry, Miss Boll-Wheel. I know it's going to take up time, and I'm only so hoping it won't interfere with the Trial Scene from *The Merchant*, but I really don't see *how* we can avoid—not that any of us would wish to—far from it—but in any case we couldn't—"

"Miss Clarence, may I remind you that I must go and receive Lady Bagge—"

"Flagge."

"Lady Flagge—and that if there's anyone else to whom thanks are due, no one will be readier than myself—"

"Someone, Miss Boll-Wheel, will have to make a speech thanking *you*."

E. M. D.

The Benefactor

WOLVES of the Russian forests, which was greater, Napoleon or the Nazis' new dictator?

And as the sun went cold into the West

They answered, "Hitler. Heil! He fed us best."

ANON.

Substantial Minority

"Are you under the impression that everybody in the Soviet Union is a Communist? If so, you will be surprised to learn that, of its 190,000 inhabitants, only about two and a half millions are members of the Communist Party."—*Aberdeen Paper*.



"Don't word the invitation in such a way that they'll feel they have to accept."

The Brain-Stormers

I

(With apologies to everybody)

THE Chairman: The first question is from Mrs. Tarby, of Whitborough. "What is a 'blimp'?" Bubble?

Commander Bubble: Well, isn't it some sort of balloon? I know when I was on the China Station in the last war we used to hear about "blimps." But there weren't any there. Of course there were two sorts of balloons in use in those days. They had the captive balloons for observation purposes on the Western Front. But I don't think they called those "blimps." Then there were the dirigible balloons for spotting submarines round the English coast. But I wasn't there.

Chairman: That's very helpful. Pixley?

Professor Pixley: My recollection is that it was a species of small dirigible balloon that got the title "blimp" in the Great War: and I suppose the name was a sort of Lewis Carroll portmanteau word—telescoping, so to speak, "balloon" and "imp"—

Commander Bubble: Or perhaps "limp"? (Laughter)

Professor Pixley: Perhaps "limp," as Bubble suggests. Certainly they had a flaccid appearance, sometimes. But I imagine that what Mrs. Tor-Tog-Tarby has in mind is the superb character created by David Low in his inimitable cartoons—"Colonel Blimp." The Colonel, you remember, was always found in a Turkish bath or doing vigorous exercises, with an astonished Low in attendance. All his

remarks began with "Gad, Sir!" I remember he was in particularly good form in the summer before the Munich crisis.

Commander Bubble: I remember now. As a matter of fact, I used to think that most of what he said was jolly good sense. Anyhow, I like a man who keeps himself fit. But, talking of balloons, I think Pixley's right. It was the *small* balloon. I mean, I don't think anyone ever called the *big* fellows "blimps." Or the Zeppelins either. But, of course, I wasn't there.

Chairman: I think, perhaps—as we are on the subject of Colonels—this is the moment for our guest, Colonel Brass, who wrote that delightful book, *Tanks or Tannenberg*?

Colonel Brass: Well, I should like to know—why this down on Colonels? After all—present company excepted, of course—a Colonel is a man who's done long service in the Army, and risen, I won't say to the top of the tree, but a good way up. And now he's in command of one of His Majesty's regiments. Well, I mean, that takes some doing: and I don't see why he shouldn't have a little respect from fellers who never carried a rifle in their lives, and couldn't fire it if they had one. Especially as *they're* the chaps who are always complaining that the Army doesn't go somewhere or other and fight somebody or other! I know the fellers. First they wanted us to fight in Spain. Then they wanted us to fight in Czecho. They simply weren't

happy without a war! And now that there is a bit of a war on, what are *they* doing, I'd like to know? Fighting? No. Still sitting about and writing articles about "blimps." I see the word everywhere. Not that I care much—I've not the least idea what a "blimp"'s supposed to be. But I'm sure it's meant to be insulting; and, since the chap's a Colonel, I'd like to say "What have the Colonels done?"

The Chairman: Thank you, Colonel, I think we shall all sympathize. But I think poor Mrs. Tarby must be wondering rather anxiously when she will get an answer to her question: "What is a blimp?" As the Colonel has said, the word is in constant use just now.

Commander Bubble: I don't think anyone has applied the term to a barrage-balloon. Of course, a barrage-balloon is not really a balloon at all. Nor was a Zeppelin.

Chairman: Perhaps Goad can help us? Goad?

Professor Goad: What is a "blimp"? I thought Pixley's answer was extraordinarily superficial; and no one else has even touched the fringe of the question. It's perfectly true, as Pixley said, that it was Low who passed the word into political currency; and, since the figure in his cartoon was robust and rotund, it may well be that he took the name from the balloons which Bubble has mentioned, whether mobile or static.

Professor Pixley: Probably static.

Professor Goad: For once I agree with Pixley. I doubt if in Low's mind the Colonel was capable of marked mobility. (Laughter) But then, we do not know what was in Low's mind. It is rarely easy to know the full mind of a cartoonist, because (no offence, I hope) they rarely have one. Mentally, they have a hand-to-mouth existence, and live on the larger crumbs that fall from the news-editor's table. (Laughter) It is seldom that we can perceive in their work the rudiments of a philosophy of life, or even politics. The—

Chairman: I think, perhaps, this is getting a little far from—

Professor Goad: The main thing, always, is to attack or criticize the Government, and in war-time, when it is distasteful, and even dangerous, to make continual attacks on the Government, their work suffers; and so, I am sure, do they. Now—

Chairman: I'm not at all sure that Mrs. Tarby wanted to—

Professor Goad: Now, that takes me back to the pre-war period, when Colonel Blimp was created. If Low had any clear picture of the character

in his mind—and, as I have suggested, it is by no means certain that he had—all I can say is that he never succeeded in conveying it to me. What was clear was this, that Blimp was a "figure of fun," a vehicle, as they say, for the expression of sentiments with which Low disagreed. It is the privilege of the cartoonist to create such figures, and to surround them, as Low did, with all the prejudice that they can contrive. "Blimp" was a Colonel; and, as Colonel Brass has justly complained, when a man has risen to that particular rank in the Army, it seems that he becomes automatically an object of derision—

Commander Bubble : To civilians.

Professor Goad : To certain civilians. Very much the same fate befalls bishops and professors. (*Laughter*) A bishop—

Chairman : I don't think we had better go into bishops or professors.

Professor Goad : That shows what I mean. There is a certain type of mind which has an uncontrollable itch to denigrate the great. (*Laughter*) In addition, the unfortunate Blimp was depicted with no clothes on, very little hair, and a large and ludicrous moustache. And all his remarks were prefaced by the two words "Gad, Sir!" Now, the singular thing about that—indeed, there are two singular things about that.

Chairman : Er—we have a good many other questions to deal with, Goad.

Professor Goad : One singular thing about that is this, that I don't suppose those words have fallen from any human lips since the year 1891—or thereabouts.

Professor Pixley : Perhaps that was the point.

Professor Goad : Perhaps. But if poor old *Punch* were to put "Gad, Sir!" into the mouth of any man, it would at once be said that this showed the paper to be out of touch with current life. And, indeed, I suspect that Low, who has all the innocence of an academic Leftist, *did* think there were colonels who still said "Gad, Sir!"—

Chairman : I'm not sure that all this—

Professor Goad : And the second singular thing is this, that those are the only two words of Colonel Blimp's that I can recall. "Gad, Sir!" And, with deference to Pixley, those two words do *not* give me a clear picture of the man. I could understand Pixley's interjection just now if Low were attacking Blimp as a swash-buckling "imperialist" Victorian, always eager for war. But I have a dim recollection

that it was the other way round—Low, like so many civilians, urging the Government to warlike acts abroad, and Blimp, the soldier, stupidly counselling caution. I may be wrong. But, if so, it shows how difficult it is to answer the question: "What was a blimp?"

Chairman : The question was: "What is a blimp?"

Professor Goad : I know. And with that introduction—

Commander Bubble : What?

Professor Goad : With that introduction—

Commander Bubble : Good God!

Professor Goad : With that introduction I now approach Mrs. Turton's question. "What is a blimp?" Whether Low had a clear picture of the character in his mind is not really important—

Commander Bubble : Then why the—

Chairman : S'sh!

Professor Goad : Such characters, once created, have a way of taking charge of their own lives, without reference to their creators.

Colonel Brass : Like Mrs. Grundy?

Professor Goad : Precisely. And this one seems to be completely out of hand. He is, I gather, a person in authority (but no longer necessarily a soldier); he is efficient, but overbearing and brutal; he is inefficient, old-fashioned and slack; he shows a callous disregard for the lives of British soldiers; and he shows an almost shameful reluctance to lead British soldiers to the battle; he is a "die-hard"; and he is a cowardly custard. This somewhat complex character—

Chairman : Well, I think that Mrs. Tarby has had her money's worth. The next question—

Commander Bubble : I'm pretty sure the Zeppelins were not called "blimps." A. P. H.

A Waster's Ditty

["Your old income-tax returns may help to make shells or other war munitions." *Sunday Express*.]

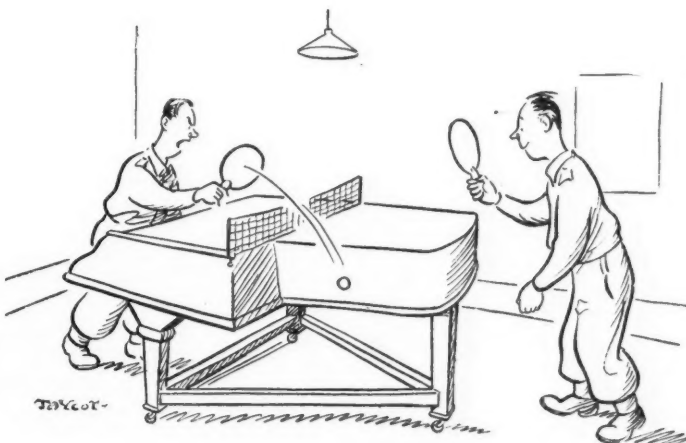
MY Uncle James is a worthy man,
A worthier one than most,
He sends in his income-tax
returns

Each time by return of post;
He pays his tailor on the nail
On the day the bill is tendered,
But I have a paper-basket full
Of accounts quite ten times rendered.

My Uncle James is the tradesmen's joy:
I am their greatest sorrow;
But think of the bills that I've put by
For the salvage man to-morrow!
And think of the awful risks I run
Of being cut off each quarter
From telephone, gas, electric-light
And Company's laid-on water!

My Uncle James is a careful man:
I am the so-called waster,
Yet I can collect rejection slips,
I am a poetaster.
I've pawned my coat, and I've lost my
shirt

On a mare named Myosotis,
Yet I'll be first with the salvage men
When they pulp my Final Notice.



"About time we changed over ends, isn't it?"

At the Pictures

WIDE CHOICE

MANY new films have turned up this fortnight, but the one to begin with, I think, is EISENSTEIN'S *Alexander Nevsky*, which is not strictly speaking new at all, having been first shown here by the Film Society before the war. The point is that now everybody has a chance to see it; and the chance is certainly one to take. This account of the defeat at Lake Peipus on April 5th, 1242, of the Teutonic Knights—here constantly referred to as "the Germans"—by the Russians under Alexander is mostly an exciting battle-piece, an example of film-craft in EISENSTEIN'S best manner, full of fresh air and honest violence and scenes pleasing to the eye. In nearly all the wide spectacular shots the horizon is kept low, near the bottom of the screen, so as to make the fullest use of the sky. There are some most magnificent effects, all thought out and used for a purpose: crowded stormy skies for battle, wide clear panoramas for peace.

The more obvious effects are forty times more obvious—the side-long glances, for instance, by means of which the Knights reveal their villainy even from within the barrel-like helmets which encourage the more light-minded among us to think of the Ku Klux Klan.

The great man himself is commandingly played by N. K. CHERKASOV, who is somewhat reminiscent of a blonder PAUL MUNI. Otherwise there is comparatively little acting to be done, for most of the film concerns the spectacular battle on the ice of the lake. I am quite sure that there must have been some perfectly genuine casualties after the filming of this battle.

Between that and the picture I must diffidently admit I enjoyed most of the others this fortnight the contrast is so enormous as to be comic. *My Life With Caroline* (Director: LEWIS MILESTONE) is trivial, slick, frivolous, with almost no story; the characters have no

"background"; it is probably the lightest and most unimportant film that ever occupied the talents of Mr.

MILESTONE, a really "big" director. But it is beautifully done, there is no jarring note, and I found it continuously entertaining. The spectacle of several exceedingly competent players under a witty director as they unostentatiously reveal dazzling skill in their several jobs can give one a great deal of pleasure, however trivial the story they tell and no matter whether it has the slightest social, moral, philosophical, political or even emotional implications. *My Life With Caroline* (RONALD COLMAN, ANNA LEE, CHARLES WINNINGER, REGINALD GARDINER—and a very funny sketch of a butler by HUGH O'CONNELL) is in my view almost pure entertainment, guaranteed to have absolutely no after-effects: a scintillating trifle. Mr. MILESTONE admittedly is capable of doing and has done big things, things very much more "important"; but I don't blame him for having taken this holiday, I thank him.



[Alexander Nevsky]

ULTERIOR MOTIVES

A Mongolian Emissary Prince Alexander Nevsky N. K. CHERKASOV



J.H.D.



[My Life with Caroline]

INTIMATE WITH THE AUDIENCE
THE FLAPPER GETS A FLUTTER.

Anthony RONALD COLMAN

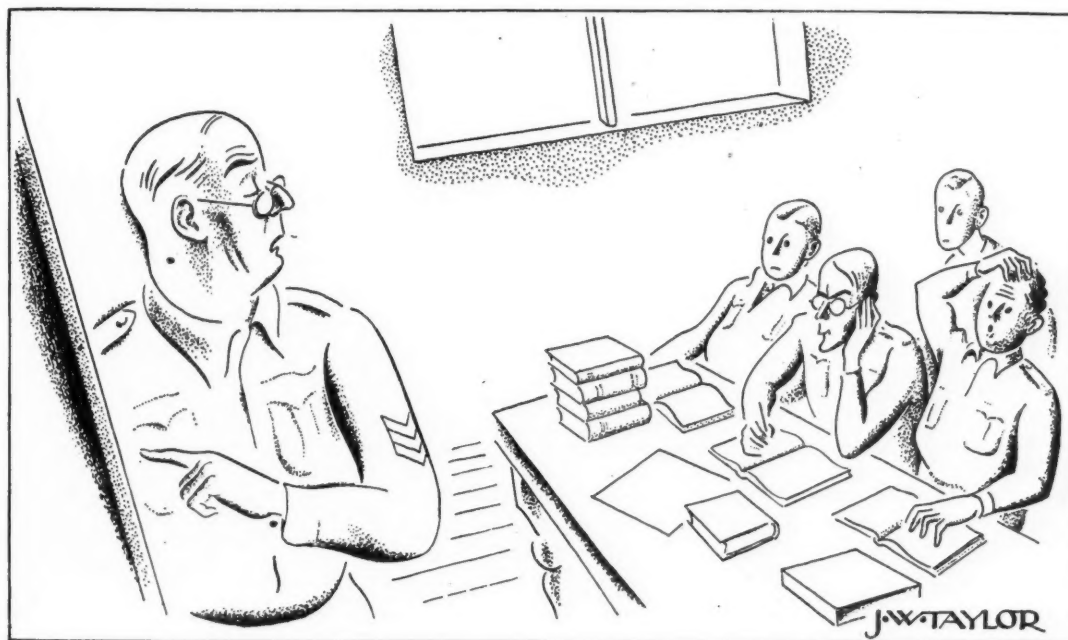
While we're on the subject of amusing trifles I may as well mention *Skylark* (Director: MARK SANDRICH), which is the same sort of husband-wife-and-third-party light comedy but without, I thought, any particular distinction—apart from that which CLAUDETTE COLBERT invariably provides. The husband is RAY MILLAND; the other man, a lawyer with a refreshingly illegal line of talk (he calls people "pal" and "chum"), is BRIAN AHERNE. WALTER ABEL adorns a small funny part.

As for *International Squadron* (Director: LEWIS SEILER), no amusing trifle, and obviously meant to grip all the customers like a hoop of steel, I'm sorry to say it left me pretty cold. This film, in spite of its generalizing title, is essentially a one-man story: the old problem of the individualist adventurer who hasn't any *esprit de corps*. RONALD REAGAN makes him credible, and there are some good spectacular air-fight scenes that ought to be exceedingly exciting. I merely record the fact that this sort of thing usually enthralls me as much as anybody, and in this instance it didn't. R. M.

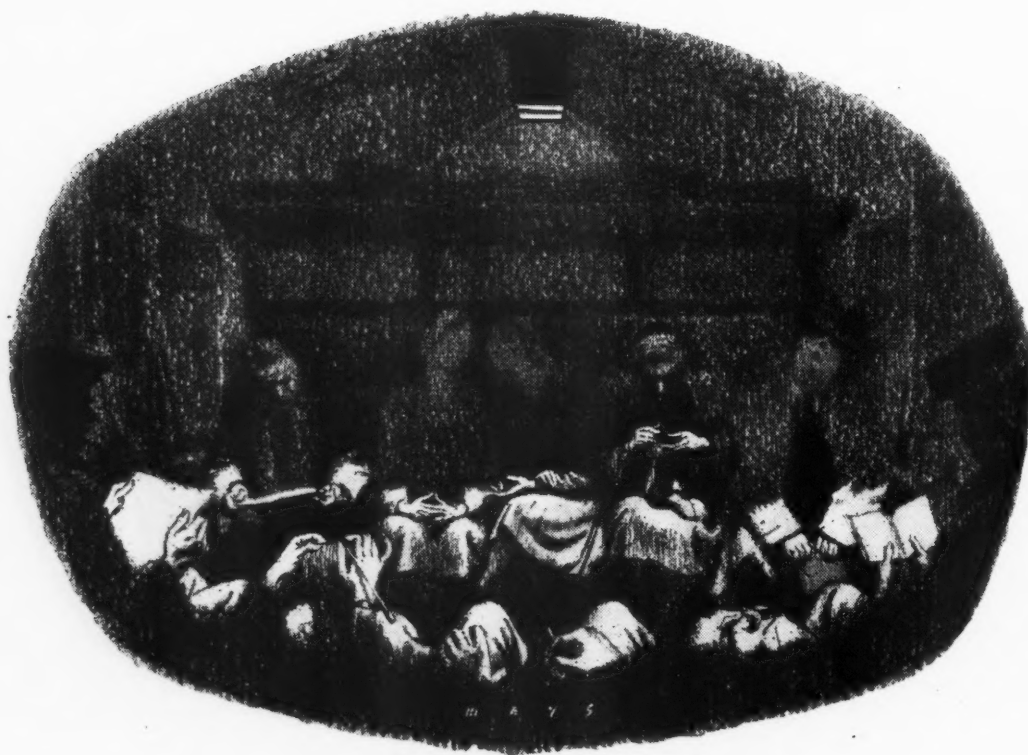
"Dear Mother, as you may guess—



University training is not much preparation for—



life in the Army."



"Well, you can see for yourself."

Autres Temps . . .

["The public schools have realised that this war is to be won not so much on the playing-fields as on the corn-fields."]

Extract from *The Downingham Chronicle*:—

CHARACTERS OF THE ELEVEN

HENDERSON (*Captain*). Wagoner. A fine driver. Has guided the team with a firm and competent rein. Particularly strong on the off-side.

PAYTON-WHITE. Farm-worker. Has ploughed a consistently straight furrow throughout the season. Unperturbed by blinding light or bumping pitch.

SPENDER. Farm-worker. Somewhat erratic in the field. Inclined to be either too late with his cutting or short of a length.

CRAGGS. Poultry-keeper. Some fine clutches at the beginning of the season. Produced a splendid pair of ducks at Westchester. Rarely fails to count his chickens.

TIGG. Gardener. Minds his peas. Never knows his beet.

CRUMP. } Regular hay-makers. Have also done some
SAMSON. } useful carting.
FLOGGE. }

CAMPBELL. Gardener. Somewhat at sea with his spade-work.

THOMPSON. Dairyman. A great asset to the side. Has natural butter-fingers.

BOONE. Farm-worker. Rather idle in the long-field. Should benefit considerably from a good threshing at the end of the season.

Why Tell?

I KNOW the ground my grandsire tilled;
Tell you? Why should I?
I mind the fragrant maunds she filled—
My grandam goody.

I see the house now; wet or fine,
The roadside lindens keep their line.
Forget, how could I?

The bouquet of that age of gold .

With no one share I;
This world's too new and I'm too old;

But here declare I:
The air we breathed was sweet, not rank;
Then nothing whizzed, boomed, buzzed or stank.
Fas gloriari!



A DOLL FOR ADOLF

Action Stationary

MINUTE 1

1st December

To Superintendent, Copy Typing

I SHOULD be grateful if you would let me have three copies of the attached draft letter.

I am informed that the shorthand typing pool is fully allocated for the rest of the morning, and it is important that this letter should catch the afternoon post.

O. WIMBUSH.

MINUTE 2

1st December

To Mr. Wimbush

I would draw your attention to Office Notice No. 175 in which it is laid down that all drafts sent to copy typing must be written in ink.

You will agree that it is hardly fair to ask my girls to decipher pencil scrawls.

Your draft is returned herewith for the necessary action.

AGATHA TICKLERIB
Superintendent, Copy Typing.

MINUTE 3

1st December

To Stationery Section

Please see the preceding Minute.

I was compelled to make a pencil draft of the letter in question (a) because I have left my fountain pen at home, and (b) because no one has as yet seen fit to provide me (a newcomer to the Department) with an official pen and ink.

Would you therefore be good enough to do the needful? O. WIMBUSH.

MINUTE 4

1st December

To Mr. Wimbush

Before requisitioning office equipment from the Stationery Section you should familiarize yourself with the terms of Office Notice No. 279 in which it is stipulated that all requisitions must be made on the appropriate form, in this case Form Z 99.

These forms should normally be obtained from Section Z, Stationery, but to expedite matters I attach a small supply. One should be completed in respect of your present requirement, and returned to the below-mentioned Section.

S. PARROTT
Section P, Stationery.

MINUTE 5

1st December

To Section P, Stationery

I now return Form Z 99 duly completed.

You will note that I have specified a "broad" nib, but in view of the urgency of the matter I shall be happy to get anything you have in stock.

O. WIMBUSH.

MINUTE 6

1st December

To Mr. Wimbush

Herewith penholder and nib as requested on Form Z 99 of to-day's date. The accompanying receipt should be signed and returned to this Section at once.

It is noted that you irregularly included in your requisition on this form an item relating to the supply of ink.

If you refer to Office Notice No. 313 you will see that the distribution of ink is the responsibility of the Office Keeper, through whom all supplies are to be obtained. Application should be made accordingly.

S. PARROTT
Section P, Stationery.

MINUTE 7

1st December

To Office Keeper

I assume that there is procedure laid down for the requisition of ink through you, but I am new to the Department and I should be much obliged if you could see your way to stretch a point and let me have a supply by return.

I want to get a letter off by the afternoon post, and time is running short.

O. WIMBUSH.

MINUTE 8

1st December

To Mr. Wimbush

Your assumption that procedure is laid down for the issue of ink is correct. This you will find set forth in Office Notice No. 690.

I should like to help you, but I am of course bound by the regulations. You will readily appreciate that if we start making exceptions it would immediately lead to a landslide of irregularities. Moreover it is essential to have a copy of the official requisition form for our records.

To expedite matters I enclose an application form Z 100, although this

should normally be had from Section Z, Stationery.

T. CHESNUT
Office Keeper.

MINUTE 9

1st December

To Office Keeper

Now we are getting somewhere. Thank you very much indeed.

I attach completed Form Z 100 in respect of the requisition of a supply of blue-black ink.

Do you think my application could have priority?

O. WIMBUSH.

MINUTE 10

1st December

To Mr. Wimbush

It would appear that the preceding Minute was addressed to me in error.

If you refer to the penultimate paragraph of Office Notice No. 690 you will note that Form Z 100 is to be sent in duplicate to the Messengers' Lobby which serves your room.

It is the function of the Messenger to issue you with ink, sending one copy of the requisition form to me, and retaining the other for record purposes.

I return your forms herewith.

T. CHESNUT
Office Keeper.

MINUTE 11

1st December

To Messenger, Lobby 5

Attached is a requisition in duplicate in respect of a supply of ink. I should be glad if you would deal with this matter at your earliest convenience.

O. WIMBUSH.

MINUTE 12

1st December

To Mr. Wimbush

Reference your ink requisition of to-day's date this appears to be in order, but it is pointed out that you have not yet been issued with an ink bottle and in these circumstances an issue of ink would merely be a nuisance.

If you peruse Office Notice No. 900 you will see that ink bottles are supplied through Section I, Stationery.

WM. PUGGE
Messenger.

MINUTE 13

1st December

To Superintendent, Copy Typing

You will no doubt have seen in Office Notice No. 1001 which was



"Curse that man Hannibal—I haven't tasted nightingales' tongues for a fortnight!"

issued to-day, and has just reached my In-tray, that the Establishments Division has sanctioned pencil drafts for copy typing as an ink economy measure.

I accordingly attach the draft which accompanied my Minute 1.

Three copies please, and immediately.

O. WIMBUSH.

Going Too Far

IT must have been coming across a small gold seal with a sprig of ivy and "à toi" engraved on the cornelian part that reminded me so vividly of my wise old friend.

"My dear," she had said many years ago, while I was waiting impatiently to be fetched to go to a party, wondering, I dare say, whether the white satin shoes wouldn't have been better after all—"don't expect too much. I know just how it is, your thoughts will have gone on too far ahead, and you know you'll find the young man exactly where you left him."

Of course she was right, and the soft words I had dreamed of turned out to be an invitation to a rowdy party at the Wembley Exhibition. But it cuts both ways. By the time I have made every allowance for the last train being late, or the fog rising, I have cheerfully planned which coat to dye black, and framed brave answers to letters of condolence. This macabre consolation may be peculiar to women, who, contrary to popular belief, spend much of their lives waiting for men; but all the same, did not Mr. Jos Sedley's valet loiter in spirit with his young lady on his arm, dressed out in his master's frogged coat and lace at the first sign of danger? It is curious how coolly we place the remains on a stretcher, and how often I have found myself unconcernedly and with great courage dragging the body from the water. A favourable balance in our pass books and we are living at the Ritz; a moment's relief from pain and the cure is complete. I have never yet listened properly to the painstaking description of the way when I have at last found a local inhabitant to ask, so pleased am I not to be actually facing

the wrong way: in imagination I am home already.

But I really did think I had at last found my level, that no longer fancy overrode the facts. Until this morning, as I woke up, I found myself wondering what I would do if Hitler came to tea.

With superb aplomb I would meet him in the hall. Taking his hat and greatcoat and laying them on the oak chest I would ask him if he would like to wash. By the time he rejoined me my plans would be laid.

Plying him with white bread and butter, with the last tin of treacle, or the choice of the month's ration of jam, I would beam tolerantly on his little foreign ways. Rising to gain position, I would take the lid off the tea-kettle, complaining as I did so of the inability of a watched pot to boil. Then with lightning action I would tip the whole of the boiling water over his head.

Really, I considered, as I threaded the tab which had come off the end of a shoe-lace, how idiotic I was!

But tying the bow of the second shoe with a firm tug, I decided I hadn't gone too far at all.



"Oh! so you're about again, are you? Starting your old tricks?"

Delilah

"**D**ELILAH," said Sapper Sympton, "reminds me of one of those tall svelte, foreign spies who used to fill mystery stories in the good old days before the ordinary sinister Foreign Agents were superseded by quislings and Fifth Columnists."

Delilah served behind the bar of the George Inn at Chollington. We were on manœuvres, and a kindly fate had decreed that we should spend several days guarding a bridge just in front of the George. There were thirty of us, and we slept in the stables and were permitted by a kindly landlord to wash and shave and otherwise make ourselves at home in the cloak-room of the hotel. The rest of the time, except when we were on sentry-duty, we spent in the bar.

Sympton is not at his best in the presence of ladies. Men, whatever their

rank, have no terrors for him, and he will give a bishop hints on preaching or a brigadier hints on strategy with the utmost camaraderie. With ladies, however—even ladies behind bars—he is extremely diffident, and he has never been known to address them more intimately than by saying "Half of bitter," "Two pints of mild," or, in his boldest moods, "I wonder if by any chance you have any tobacco, cigarettes or matches?"

Unfortunately this Delilah had a playful sense of humour, and it was as much as Sympton dared to approach the bar. She fixed him with her flashing eyes and, as he put it, made cold shivers go down his spine.

He was quite glad, on the third day, to be obliged to absent himself from the bar. This was due to Lieutenant Vague suddenly getting an idea, which is rather a failing of his.

"Sympton," he said, "I have decided to put the Bren gun in one of the upper rooms of the hotel, the window of which commands the rise on the other side of the bridge over which we expect the enemy to appear. You and Sapper Purver can have charge of the gun. I will show you where it is to go."

Sympton followed him upstairs. The George is one of those old rambling hotels of which Dickens was so fond, and it took quite a time to find the right room.

"This is it," said Lieutenant Vague at last. "It belongs to a retired Major named Hopkins or Jenkins or something. He was only too delighted to let us have it. Of course he will be sleeping here during the night, so you must be as quiet as you can."

Sapper Sympton went down to fetch Sapper Purver out of the bar, and the

Bren gun from the truck, and presently they had got the gun in position by the window.

"The sun is streaming into the room," said Sapper Purver, "and the barrel will gleam and give the enemy a hint that we are here. I suggest that we put the gun at the back of the room on one of the beds. The Major won't want to sleep on both of them."

Sympton thought it was a good idea, especially as, to use a Bren gun, you have to lie flat, and lying flat on a bed was much more comfortable than lying flat on the floor. It was very comfortable indeed—so comfortable, in fact, that in ten minutes Sapper Sympton was fast asleep. If Sapper Purver had noticed this when Lieutenant Vague called him down to take over the anti-tank gun it would not have mattered so much. But Sapper Sympton had not slept for three nights, and he made up for it now.

"I was awakened," he said, "by a rustling noise. The moonlight was streaming into the room, but the bed on which I lay was in shadow. A figure was dimly to be seen, evidently undressing, and at first, of course, I thought it was Major Jenkins, or Hopkins. I was just going to greet him with a cheery word when the figure came between me and the window, and I saw to my horror that it was Delilah."

"It reminds me," said Corporal Bean, "of that scene in *Pickwick Papers* where Mr. Pickwick found himself in the lady's bedroom by mistake."

"The same parallel occurred to me," said Sympton. "I was as effectively concealed by the shadows and by the eiderdown which Sapper Purver had placed over me as Mr. Pickwick was by the bed-curtains. I remembered with horror the scene that ensued when Mr. Pickwick revealed himself, and it seemed to me that Delilah was an infinitely tougher nut than the lady with whom he was involved."

Mr. Pickwick, however, had no Bren gun, or the world would never have heard of Mr. Nupkins, and Mr. Jingle might have married the magistrate's daughter and Job Trotter might have married the cook.

In his nervousness Sapper Sympton pressed the trigger of the Bren gun and fired a burst of twelve rounds—fortunately blank, but as noisy as the real thing. Delilah left the room with a celerity that would have done credit to a P.T. corporal, and Sapper Sympton got a special word of praise from Major Corcoran for raking the enemy with fire just as they were about to advance over the bridge.

The Happy Novelist

I HAVE every reason to be happy. For to-day I have discovered—indeed I have acquired irrefutable proof—that there is someone in this world who has read a book of mine. And by that I mean read it as it should be read.

If you move in the places where authors talk about themselves—which of course is anywhere that authors are—you may think that we only care about our royalties. But, believe me, it is not so. That is the screen to hide the bitterness in our hearts. Royalties console us for the constant lack of real appreciation.

Little, in our inmost souls, do we care for the tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, who take our books from the libraries. We know

that not even our most beautifully turned sentence will hold them when someone says, "It's time for the nine o'clock news." We know they miss our subtleties, they hurry through our lyric passages. In our depressed moments we are even ready to believe that some of them skip.

But if we had one reader who appreciated our work—if there was one person who read us with the devoted care we deserve; who pondered on every word, missing nothing; who would pick out one passage in the book, one sentence, even one magic word, and say at the end, "I have read this book: of it all, one phrase stands out in my recollection"—then we should feel that we had not sat before our typewriters in vain.

So to-day let the trumpets sound: for I have found that ideal, devoted reader. He has even written to me about my book. His note lies before me now. It says: "READ by Censor. Passed subject to deletion of word ——. This word occurs once only: on page 279, in the fourteenth line from the bottom."



"Is there any reason why it doesn't let—apart from the drains?"

At the Play

"OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES" (AMBASSADORS)

At last the theatre is beginning to catch up with the war. It is a form of pursuit which has its obvious difficulties. For example, those who wish to dramatize the minor horrors of the Home Front are naturally, as dramatists, aware that drama springs from conflict and laughter from sufferings. Supposing the theme is the arrival of evacuees, must there not be a clash and shindy to yield the stuff of bustling comedy? Certainly. But if too much is made of the domestic rumpus arising when two strong women share the same kitchen, will that course not be a sorry advertisement for the right policy of dispersing the population, and may it not even be chargeable with causing, not proper mirth in the proper place, but "despondency and alarm," as the officials say, among evacuees and their hosts?

One fancies that Mr. LYNNE DEXTER, the author of *Other People's Houses*, has been sensitive to this dilemma. His simple little comedy has a kind of wobbliness emerging from the double desire to laugh at the unbiddable evacuees and to appreciate their point of view. First, the dramatist seems to be painting them red and then to be looking charitably round for a remedial bucket of white-wash. When *Mrs. Shore* arrives at *Mrs. Sheldon's* home in Gloucestershire she brings with her a daughter who appears to be as naughty a little baggage as ever needed smacking. Without fear (and with every cause for reproach) this greedy little vampire treats the Cotswolds as though they were the Hot Spot Holiday Camp at Shrimpton-on-Sea. But in the last ten minutes the author suddenly, and quite unconvincingly, makes an honest woman of her and marries her into the Navy List and almost into the B.B.C. The former body certainly has deserved no such fate.

Mrs. Shore, too, who seemed likely to be as grim a visitor as ever akimboed powerful arms or beetled a malignant brow, is dismissed almost with a benediction. *Mrs. Sheldon* concludes

the entertainment with a speech on the quality of mercy whose sentiments are admirable. It is easy to sympathize with Mr. DEXTER's call for sympathy; he is, in making it, being a good citizen. But he is also being a less

equating war-time visitors with a war-time larder, most amusingly radiates bemused benevolence. Miss OLIVE WALTER, as the stern invader, makes *Mrs. Shore* a natural figure as well as an awkward customer. Miss

ROBERTA HUBY bestows upon the gay *Miss Shore* the maximum of decoration and the minimum of decorum. That the author makes nonsense of the part in the last ten minutes is not the fault of this very spirited performer. Miss PHYLIS DARE, as a wireless star, presents the handsomest lady who ever took cab and script to the microphone, and makes it completely incredible that her maturely charming husband (Mr. HENRY EDWARDS) should be continually looking in any direction but hers. Presenting a trim façade of mellow middle-age and suggesting every likelihood of the conduct becoming to a gentleman, poor Mr. EDWARDS has consistently to behave like a really nasty old man, and suavely conceals the contradiction.

Miss RENÉ RAY, Miss PAMELA STIRLING and Mr. DEREK BLOMFIELD contribute efficiently to a diminutive fable which just serves to knit the larger fun together. They perform this necessary needlework loyally, while Miss ESME CANNON triumphantly grasps the more obvious opportunities. Needless to say, *Mrs. Sheldon* has "staff trouble." Miss CANNON, as a local twig ("staff" being altogether too substantial a word for this tiny and timid retainer), is extremely amusing in her efforts to be the prop of an establishment in upheaval.

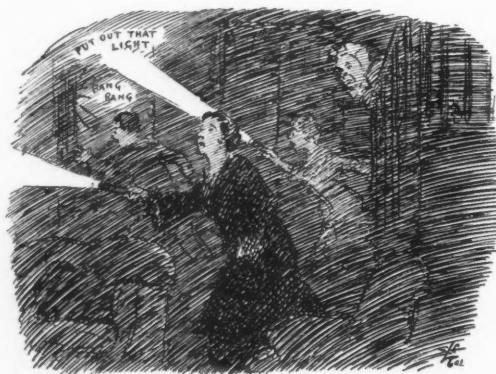
That she should be filled with excess of sherry is a comedy cliché, but Miss CANNON's wild-eyed anæmic ecstasy gives it freshness. Poor *Mrs. Sheldon* amid her naughty visitors and neighbours! But happy still to have some sherry left. When Mr. DEXTER writes a sequel, will she have come down to parsnip-wine? I. B.



THE AWAKENING OF DIANA

Diana Jones. Miss ESME CANNON
Michael Grahame. Mr. DEREK BLOMFIELD

than good dramatist, for comedy, to be complete, must keep its characters true to their "humours" and its whole mood of absurdity true to its own logic of laughter. Drolls who wobble into ethics may deserve our moral



THE QUIET HOURS OF THE NIGHT

plaudits: but they must, alas! diminish their own drollery.

However, if you regard the play's action as a series of isolated incidents and the performances as a series of turns, there is plenty to amuse. Miss MARIE LOHR, as a kindly matron beset by mischief and mischance, cajoling reluctant tradesmen and somehow

PUNCH ALMANACK, 1942

This will be published on November 17th, but, owing to the paper restrictions, only a limited number will be issued.

Regular readers who wish to secure a copy and have not already placed an order with their newsagent, should do so at once.



NORMAN MANSBRIDGE

Music in London

"LITTLE JETS . . ."

THERE is unhappily only too much truth in Professor JOAD's recent remark about the "little jets of ill-tempered sound which our musicians cause their instruments to emit," but even this dismal dictum takes no count of the many other unpleasing sounds which assail our ears—pretentious sounds, "clever" sounds and, worst of all (and this our Sunday evening mentor might well have quoted to illustrate his contention that men have forgotten their ideals and lost their faith) the dreary sounds labelled *Gebrauchsmusik*—sounds, born of the cynical conviction that "inspiration is bunk," generated in bulk like electricity and laid on for everyday use.

To so many of these sounds have we

listened in the name of music that to hear a new work innocent of them is like finding a crystal spring in a thirsty land. His *Symphony* and *Viola Concerto* have shown us long since that Mr. WILLIAM WALTON is not a victim of Twentieth-century Blues, and a large audience came to the Albert Hall to hear him conduct his new *Violin Concerto* (written for and dedicated to HEIFETZ) which was played for the first time in London by Mr. HENRY HOLST at a concert of the Royal Philharmonic Society. It is in three movements—Andante, Scherzo and Finale—of which the first, in modified sonata form, is certainly the best, but the whole concerto is extremely well written and quite free of strivings after effect for its own sake. The solo part is real violin music, in contrast to the creations of many other composers of music for stringed instruments, whose aim seems often to be to read in the

next morning's papers that they "exploited the instrument's capabilities to the full," whether or not their antics sound well, and whether or not the musical content of these little jets of ingenuity is worth all the fuss and, for the soloist, all the practising. Mostly it is not. Mr. WALTON, however, is far too good a musician to treat us to any of these contortions; instead he has given violinists a concerto which contains not only brilliant and effective passages, as in the Scherzo, but some really beautiful singing melodies (rather reminiscent of the *Violin Concerto* of DELIUS) which are no doubt as satisfying to play as they are to hear. The orchestration is varied and colourful, but never over-weights the soloist. The *Concerto* is not, perhaps, of the same calibre as Mr. WALTON's *Symphony*, but is one which should win the appreciation of players and listeners alike.

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Mob Rule in Byzantium

THE popularity of ancient history—which in more literate days furnished so many useful parallels to parliamentary orators—is that it reflects on a manageable scale the problems that occur in every city-dominated state. So although Mr. JOHN MASEFIELD disclaims any ulterior motive in describing the faction riots that nearly demolished Byzantium in A.D. 532, it is obvious that he has thoroughly enjoyed the contemporary implications of a peculiarly grim account of the domestic evils of foreign wars. Here you have the clash of property-owners and traders under JUSTINIAN and THEODORA. The Persian War, contrived by the first party with a view to ruining the second, had stripped the city of defences. "In all wars," the imaginary Greek narrator comments, "personal liberties become restrained and happy enjoyments difficult; the lie becomes extremely powerful, and adroit scoundrels find it easy to plunder the citizen." But the revolutionary Bessus and his Youth Movement were out for more flagrant successes than these smouldering encroachments; and the fires they lit were not quenched until BELISARIUS returned with his barbarians and broke the rebellion at its climax. *Conquer* (HEINEMANN, 6/-) is a great story in a small compass, and Mr. MASEFIELD has told it magnificently.

First Over France

With extraordinary vividness and simplicity a *Fighter Pilot* (BATSFORD, 6/-)—who jotted down his day's doings as they came along and wrote them up afterwards in a fat notebook—gives his own private version of the momentous epic of the first squadron of Hurricanes to reach France in September 1939. "PAUL," badly wounded, got back in June 1940, five days before his fellows, who were the last squadron but one to leave. The ups and downs of that handful of outnumbered fighters; the gains and losses of battle never declined; camaraderie in French billets and messes; "queer happenings" among local quislings; the gradual conviction that the Hun atrocities one hadn't meant to credit were part of a savagely-fulfilled programme; the irony of the return—with shattered France below one minute and a village cricket-match on a Dorset green



Mervyn Hanson

the next—these are part and parcel of a gallant, great-hearted and touchingly unaffected book. If those who read it for its unsurpassed adventurousness come to realize what even victories cost in overstrain and the pathetic search for oblivion, this record—and others like it—should inspire not only a legitimate patriotic pride but a contrite world's matter for repentance and amendment.

The Rector of Saffronlea

A period-piece of mid-Victorian days is what Lady (WINIFRED) PECK has made her new novel, *A Garden Enclosed* (FABER, 7/6). She has cleverly chosen to build her plot around two themes which were responsible for half the family tragedies of those days—the bitter feud between the Evangelical and Catholic parties and the deification of Papa. Here we have the Low Church Rector of Saffronlea become such a petty tyrant that his wife takes to her bed and hides behind ill-health, his elder son runs away, and his younger son and his daughters, after their different fashions, tremble at his nod or deceive him. Then to the Manor House comes an agnostic family with Roman Catholic connections, a family that has three young men among its members. In a setting of flounces and flowers, walks in dewy meadows, and rain-washed archaeological picnics, three love-stories develop; and then events take a sudden turn which leaves *Letty*, the sweetest of the Rectory girls, homeless and penniless in a London slum. Lady PECK has done nothing better, and the Rector's final solution of all difficulties is a masterpiece of humour and observation.

Bunting's Blitzkrieg

Bunting, as a material, is both stout and common. But bunting is the stuff from which banners are made; and when Mr. ROBERT GREENWOOD's practical and pertinacious little hero gets well into his stride—when his London terminus is bombed, his own suburb half demolished, a son lost with his Spitfire and a grandson born in a blitz—*Mr. Bunting*, really *Mr. Bunting at War* (DENT, 8/-), himself notes with a rare and exalted flight of fancy that even his unpretentious name has its heroic associations. That of course is where the skill of this particular narrative lands you. You are spared neither the vulgarity nor the loose cohesion of the unruffled *Bunting* household. Even the young *Buntings'* youthful attempts at distinction—*Ernest's* music, *Chris's* courtship of *Marvellous Monica*, *Julie's* vegetarian refinements—are, in a way, protests against the unprized humdrum security wrested by *Mr. Bunting* out of his toils in Brockley's ironmongery department. Gradually, very gradually, the domestic and patriotic values emerge. A little less reliance on obvious poignancies of situation and more on such excellent genre-painting as *Mrs. Bunting* "playing Patience with the laundry" might have resulted perhaps in something even more memorable.

The Voice from a Grave

Inspector Bobby Owen of the C.I.D. is already well known and well liked by so many that an introduction is scarcely necessary. In the latest tale of his adventures, *The Dark Garden* (GOLLANCZ, 8/-), his author, Mr. E. R. PUNSHON, gives him a particularly difficult murder problem to solve and encourages him to go about the business in his usual charmingly unself-assertive way. His investigations lead to the discovery of embezzlement, a second murder and a newly-dug grave in a garden. He, as the reader will probably do mentally, nearly arrests the wrong man. Mr. PUNSHON



*Lady (looking out of train on to darkened platform). "PORTER, IS THIS EDGWARE ROAD? I CAN'T SEE A THING."
Porter (with Irish blood in her). "NOT YET, M'M. EDGWARE ROAD'S THE STATION BEFORE YOU GETS TO BAKER STREET."*

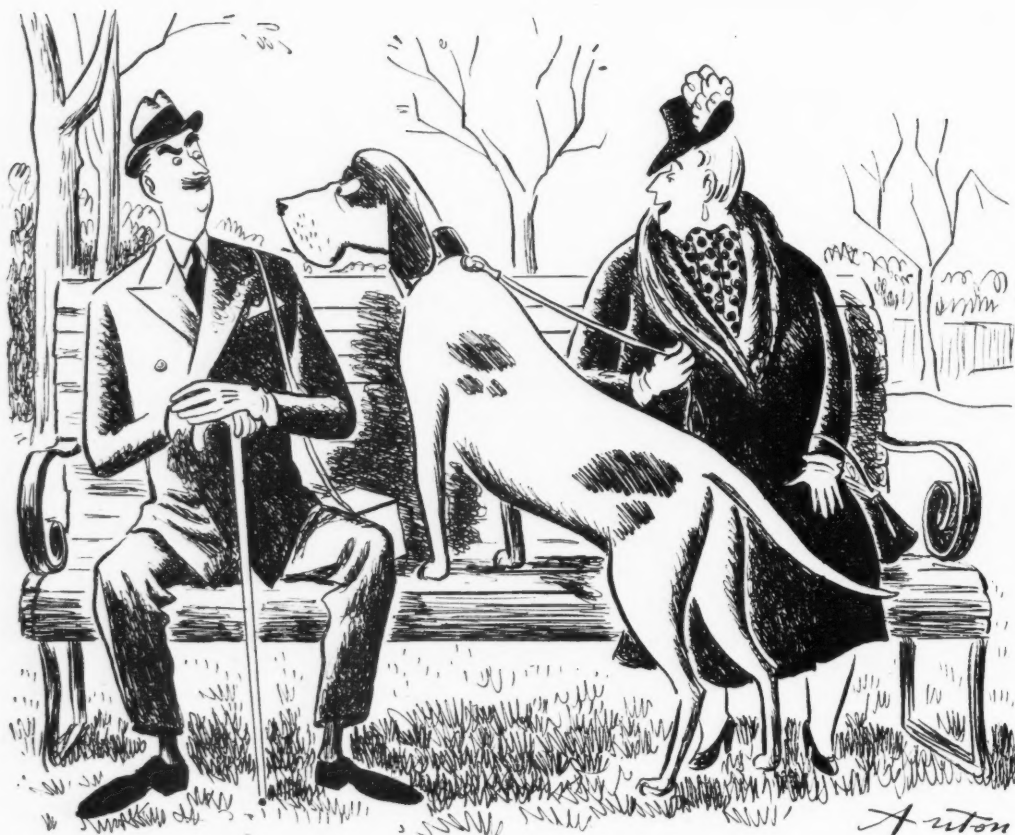
C. A. Shepperson, November 14th, 1917

is undoubtedly master of his own particular craft. In this new book he introduces us to many unforgettable characters—a mother who poses as an aunt, a daughter who nearly brings her unrecognized father to the gallows, and a bad man who spends his life and money on charity.

Gypsy Hall

One can imagine no finer exploit for a wife and mother whose man is serving than to send herself as a day-boarder to an agricultural college (keeping the children alongside), buy a farm, stock it, and get it running against her husband's return. How this master-stroke was mooted in October 1939 by a territorial whose peace-time job involved an office; how his wife put herself to school at Moulton

Institute of Agriculture in January 1940; bought Gypsy Hall (a mixed farm on Warwickshire clay) in April, and ran it with a team of friendly experts to advise her, is the delightful and inspiring theme of *Approach to Farming* (FABER, 7/6). Mrs. FRANCES DONALDSON is perhaps a rather insular enthusiast. One doubts if she has ever seen a continental holding; and she dismisses the luckless small proprietor ("the government started the rot . . . the farmers themselves finished it") with a somewhat short-sighted kick at the patient posterior of "*Farmer Giles*." But she takes up her own challenge with exhilarating courage and competence; and she and her like may be trusted (one hopes) to hold their own (and ours) when the menace of "cheap" imported food gets going again after the war.



"He's quite harmless except that he bites."

How I Became a Landlord.

"It's quite a nice house," said the estate agent. "I think you ought to get five guineas for it."

"But the furniture alone cost me more than that," I replied doubtfully. "I really don't think I can let the place go for five guineas."

His face assumed an expression of pity, probably its first since childhood. "I don't mean *sell* it. Your wife instructed me to *let* it furnished for the duration of the war. I propose a five-guinea rent."

"Oh, I see. You mean every so often I shall receive a five-guinea cheque?"

"Certainly, except that we shall collect the rent quarterly. But that is the fundamental idea."

"Easy, isn't it? I can't understand why we didn't think of this before. It seems to be money for nothing."

"Well, not exactly. You'll pre-

sumably have to live somewhere else yourself."

"Yes, unfortunately."

"And you'll have to pay quite a lot back in income tax and rates."

I didn't really mind the rates very much. I have paid none since the house was built two years ago; I think the authorities must have forgotten me. Of course it would have been asking for trouble to mention this to the agent; I am sure he is in a clique with all the others. I have myself heard him address the Sanitary Inspector by his Christian name, and one could hardly have clearer evidence of dishonesty.

"I suppose I shall," I replied with feigned gloom.

"And you'll be expected to make good any fair wear and tear."

"You mean that if they cut up my

best furniture to help out the coal they'll have to replace it, but if they merely take an odd leg off the kitchen table they can write to me for another?"

"Well, roughly. But the tenants I have in mind are very decent people. I'll send them along to see you. Keep on the right side of them, but be sure to hold out for five guineas."

"Trust me. I'm looking forward to those cheques already."

My wife decided to take the children out of the way while I conducted a tour of inspection. A stern-looking man appeared, accompanied by two boys whose faces reeked of original sin.

"This," I explained to them, "is the lounge."

The elder criminal gave the keyboard of my Bechstein the surprise of its life, while his brother tore a couple of

excellent pictures from *The Child's Book of Animals* and stuffed them in his pocket for future reference. Father looked round with obvious distaste.

"I suppose you have some sort of black-out," he said.

"Yes. You clip it up like this. Awful job; it takes me nearly half an hour every night." The boys got hold of the material. "It looks as though it might take you rather longer," I added. "Would you like to see the rest of the house?"

"We might as well. We've seen the garden already. Lot of work there, I should say, and not much to show for it. Why didn't you have all those stumps out when the trees were felled?"

"Oh, I like an odd stump or so about the place. They may be an acquired taste, but you'll learn to love them in time."

"I hope I shan't be here long enough for that. Well, where is the rest of the house?"

"Through this door," I said courteously. "After you."

On the whole I did rather well. The kitchen was the worst place.

I showed them how to adjust the boiler for the central heating and I also succeeded in emptying it, but I fear the plumber will have to find a fresh lot of water to fill it with, because I quite spoiled the stuff we had in. I managed to sort out the electric installations—cooker, refrigerator and washer—in the end, and anyway their functions are to some extent interchangeable. For instance, you can preserve milk in any of them, though it may be only in the form of cheese. Luckily these boys liked cheese, as I found when I showed them the larder. I expect we shall get another ounce or two next week; and meanwhile we can fall back on the stuff I scraped out of the washer—I have since made it edible by passing it through the wringer.

The bedrooms were approved. But my bed, though strongly-built, was not intended for gymnasium-work, and I must confess I was just the least bit annoyed with the boys by the time we had done the rounds, for the house was not yet actually let, and I was afraid they might do so much damage before the deal was completed that their father would insist on a reduction of the rent. I never could understand why boys must be boys.

"Now," said father, "what would you do if an incendiary landed in the roof?"

I showed him my stirrup-pump, bucket of sand, chemical fire-extinguisher, and a selection of

appropriate implements, all neatly set off by a charming display of my daughters' sand-pies.

"Yes, but how do you get them into the roof?"

"I've never taken the pies up there."

"Very sensible. But the rest of the stuff?"

"Well, I've never taken that up either. But in case of emergency I have a collapsible iron ladder. Here it is. You just unhook it, take it by the side handles"—the boys were by this time bending with me over the ladder—"and pull."

The thing flew open with a jerk at this point; I have never been able to control its speed. The top rung caught the elder boy a splendid blow on the jaw that knocked him clean off his feet, concussed him a little, and I fancy permanently elongated his neck. At first I thought I had killed him, and I was annoyed to think that his father might be disinclined to go on with the deal—so often men allow sentiment to interfere with business. I dropped the ladder hurriedly, to be rewarded by a dreadful scream of anguish from the other boy, whose fingers, caught between two rungs, were painfully crushed.

The double calamity overcame me completely. I released the imprisoned fingers, allowed the howling urchin to throw himself down by the side of his brother, who turned out to be only

temporarily unconscious, and then steeled myself to look at father.

He was roaring with laughter. "I've been waiting years," he shouted, "to see those damned boys get what was coming to them. I don't know why you stuck them so long; I hate to see my own furniture knocked about. However, it was a great effort when it came. I'll take the house if only to remind me of this when I feel dismal. But," he added more soberly, "I think five guineas is a bit high."

"Do you? Well, I don't make very much out of it. You see, I have income tax, rates and repairs to think about, and of course I must live somewhere myself. Let's work it out. Twelve fives are sixty; sixty guineas is sixty-three pounds; divide by two—"

He interrupted in a studiously calm voice.

"You mean the rent is five guineas a month?" he asked.

Even before I answered I saw my blunder, and knew it to be irretrievable. My particular brand of self-consciousness impels me, when I have publicly put one foot in anything, to put the other in after it.

"Yes," I said.

I cannot imagine what my wife will say when I summon up enough courage to tell her—it should be worth hearing. But next time she asks me to let a house I shall refuse to do it—and let her instead.



"How many *h's* in 'Брависсимо'?"

Family Portrait

"I ALWAYS like," said the photographer, as she swept about in a long artistic cloak, knocking an ornament or two here and there to the floor—"I always like to get children in their natural surroundings."

Henry, who from the first had been no party to this scheme for an indelible record of his little ones, said that the natural surroundings of his eldest son seemed at present to be the back yard, among the (as yet) unflattened tins heaped together for salvage.

Seeing a contemplative look on the photographer's face in response to this, Henry's wife Amanda said quickly "I would much rather nothing surrealistic, please!"

"No, no, naturally—children are always best among the simple moods of Nature," cried the photographer, tripping out into the garden and casting a critical gaze about her in search of a background. Neither the circular flower-bed patriotically filled with turnips, nor the garage with the corrugated iron roof seemed quite to satisfy her creative impulse.

"A little autumn foliage—that is all I require," she murmured pathetically, while the anxious parents stood close behind her and said that, besides the dearth of autumn foliage, they were so sorry it should happen to be such a dark and overclouded day.

"Conditions," said the photographer stiffly, as one suspecting a slur upon her talent, "are ideal. But, ah!" she cried suddenly, "a wild briar bush trailing over the fence—the very thing! Were we to group the little ones against that . . ."

This flight of fancy was terminated by the arrival of the eldest little one, Alexander, who, in a grey flannel suit strained to the utmost, and with his hair brushed—apparently—in imitation of the Fuehrer, presented a menacing appearance. The faintest shadow crossed the photographer's usually optimistic face, and she whispered, "A background of wild briar . . . hardly the *type* perhaps . . ." But she called gaily to him "Come then, dear! let us see where we can make the nicest picture of you for Mummy and Daddy."

Alexander said in a bass voice "The others aren't ready yet," and hastened to get out his tricycle. When prolonged and frantic screams from the house confirmed his statement, Henry said he thought he must be getting back to work now, and he and the photographer shook hands with the brilliantly fixed smiles which conceal a mutual dislike.

"I told you it wouldn't be worth it," he said to his wife as he left. "I could do better with my No. 2 Brownie box camera."

When Charlotte appeared in the garden, shivering violently in a good deal of muslin and rosebuds and with her eyes red from passionate weeping, the photographer retired swiftly under her black velvet canopy, remaining there until the baby was borne out, deeply asleep in the arms of his nurse, when she re-emerged with a startling briskness which was to give Charlotte bad dreams for many nights to come, and exclaimed "Now, here we all are at last!"

Alas! not so; for Alexander had tricycled rapidly off to see his friends, and even when he was retrieved there seemed to be a good deal of blood and oil to be erased from him. A kind of group was then formed. The baby, like the dormouse, semi-conscious, was held up by the combined efforts of Alexander and Charlotte against some rather scanty but definitely autumn foliage. Amanda was thrilled to realize that, momentarily, no one was screaming; but the photographer seemed dissatisfied. She shook her head and bit her lip.

"I don't like it," she said. Amanda felt offended. "Alexander," went on the photographer, "lean more naturally, dear; put out your hand and lean upon the branches." Alexander did his best and disappeared with a crash that was convincingly natural among the undergrowth.

"Oh, dear me!" cried the photographer irresponsibly. "What a tumble! Upsy dear. Now, Charlotte, look at me. I wonder what you'll see peeping out behind my left ear . . . in one minute . . . but you must look all the time . . . in one minute. . ."

Charlotte neither knew which was

the left ear of the photographer nor cared what should appear behind it, but when it proved to be her own teddy bear she became not unnaturally suffused with rage.

"Oh, come!" said the photographer, a little daunted. "I'm afraid that's not a photogenic expression," she complained to Amanda. "Now, chick-abiddies, just watch me blow this feather—pouf!—up into the air. *Wherever* will it go?"

As the photographer was not concentrating properly the feather fell at her feet. Alexander's gloom deepened. The baby woke up completely and evidently became conscious of an autumn nip in the air. Now and then the nurse said that if, after all this, they weren't all in bed for weeks with pleurisy and pneumonia she for one would be very surprised. When, some time later, the photographer gathered some plates, swept into the house, and locked herself in the cellar for half an hour, where she clattered about among the empty bottles, Amanda said to herself: "We are only at the beginning." This proved to be the case.

A fortnight later much correspondence began to flow between Amanda and the photographer. In Amanda's letters this kind of thing frequently appeared: "If you could possibly take Alexander's face out of G.3 and put in the rather happier one . . . I'm so sorry to bother you again, but G.6 would be perfect if it weren't for the angle the baby is at . . . Could you take nannie's feet out of G.7? . . . I don't know if I'm obliged to order the whole dozen? . . ."

One day, when the correspondence was at its height, Henry returned home with a small parcel which he modestly undid. It contained a photograph, in a frame, of his three children. They looked just as one would wish one's children to look—smiling, tidy, rational, recognizable, and with aureoles of golden hair.

"An enlargement," Henry said, with downcast eyes. "Not bad; considering how long the box-camera had been in the attic."

He placed it silently on the mantelpiece. His behaviour was unbelievably correct.

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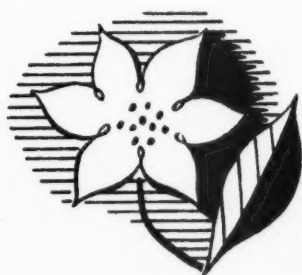
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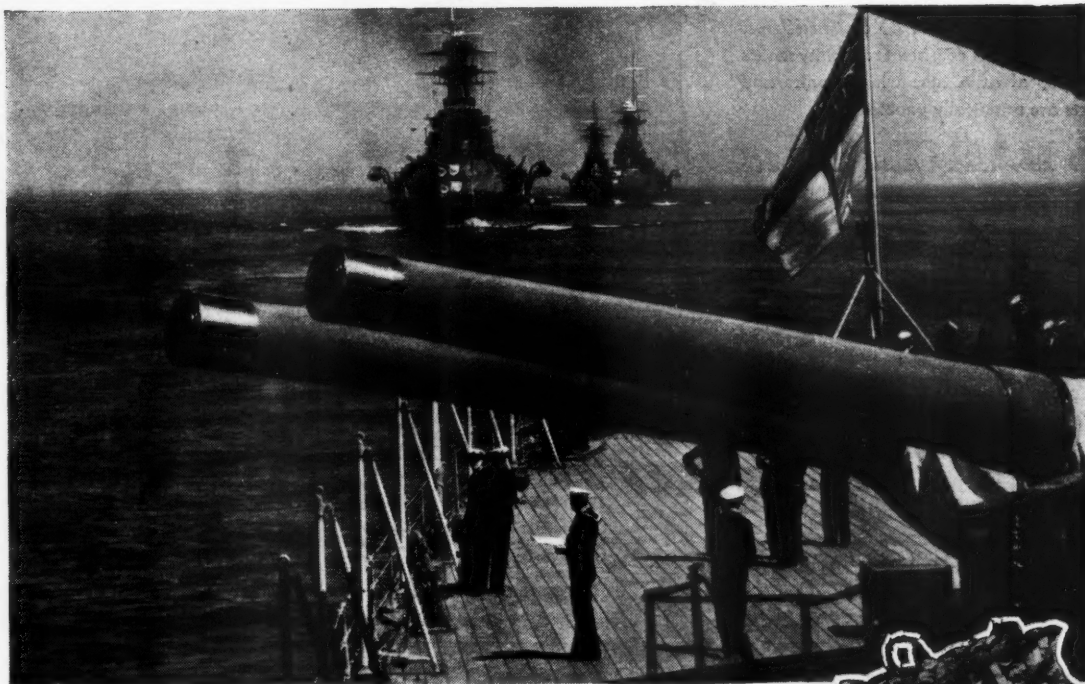
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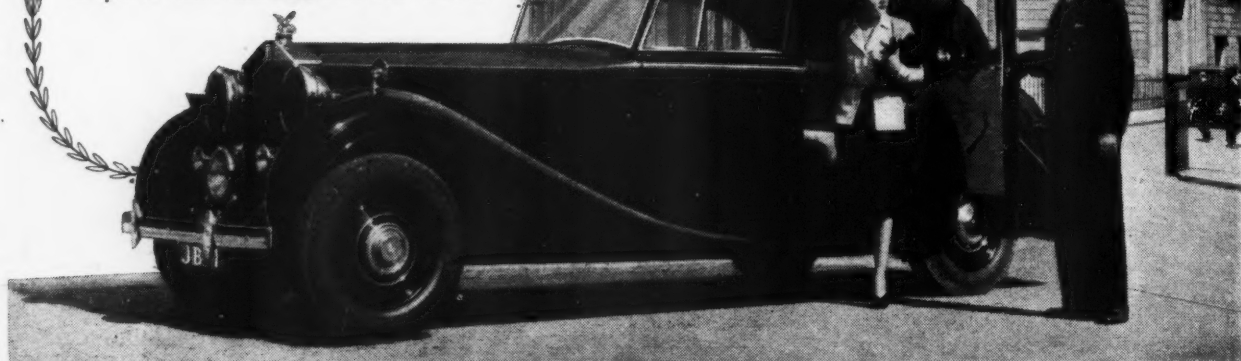
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Flags still play their picturesque part for short-distance communication. But for long distances we rely to-day on the lightning speed of messages sent under the sea and through the air. Thanks to the world-wide services developed by Cable and Wireless Ltd., messages—'via Imperial'—can cross the globe in a flash, and at remarkably inexpensive rates. Such facilities have opened a new era of social and economic progress; they have helped to establish a cohesion of Empire whose strength must always lie in its power of swift and easy contact.

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The Ovaltine Girl

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As in the Great War of 1914-1918, 'Ovaltine' is widely used throughout the Services and in military and civil Hospitals.

Drink delicious

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-and keep fit for Service



SANTA CLAUS - a la mode !

Here I am—in war time kit—with my sack of gifts in one hand and a Stirrup Pump in the other !

Not quite the sort of Christmas I've been used to. But still it's Christmas, and still there's the same spirit of good will—even if there has to be a little less "good cheer".

Toffee and Chocolate were my time-honoured stand-bys for Christmas. In fact, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without them.

So I'm glad that *some* of those good things are still to be had—even although there is only half as much as usual.

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"Quality Street" and "Double Centre" Assortments	-	-	8d. per qr. lb.
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HOW TO MAKE MONEY BY FORGING

It won't be our fault if this advertisement doesn't turn out to be one of the most profitable you have ever read. It is going to explain to manufacturers how to make money, after the war, out of somebody else's forging. The method is simple. Take a motor-car manufacturer, for example, who has been having trouble with rear-axle casings and wants greater strength with less weight. Forgings from steel tubes would help him all right! All he has to do is to write to the Steel Tubes Advisory Centre for a preliminary course of advice on the skilful art of forging, which is given free and without obligation. The great thing about this idea is that instead of ending in a term of hard labour it actually leads to less. It also has the approval of bodies who can detect flaws every bit as quickly as Scotland Yard,

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ASTON · BIRMINGHAM · ENGLAND *Manufacturers who need advice or information on any job where steel tubes might help, will find the Steel Tubes Advisory Centre ready to assist in every possible way*



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From the R.A.F.
"50% of our Mess smoke one or other of your Barneys Brands."

From the Middle East
"I have not come across a Tobacco with the same even smoking and flavour of Barneys."

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"Your Barneys is all that a pipe-lover could desire—a delightful Tobacco."

*They've spread
 the fame of
Barneys*

Men like these know what's good! They *deserve* the best anyway . . . There *must* be something outstanding about Barneys for them to write to the makers as they do. From the Navy, the Army, the Air Force—and the Merchant Service, come these letters of thanks and appreciation, from all over the World.

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- to the ends of all the Earth!



January	February	March	April	May	June
S . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	S . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	S . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	S . . . 5, 12, 19, 26	S . . . 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	S . . . 7, 14, 21, 28
M . . . 5, 12, 19, 26	M . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	M . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	M . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	M . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	M . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
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F . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	F . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	F . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	F . . . 3, 10, 17, 24	F . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	F . . . 5, 12, 19, 26
S . . . 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	S . . . 7, 14, 21, 28	S . . . 7, 14, 21, 28	S . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	S . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	S . . . 6, 13, 20, 27
July	August	September	October	November	December
S . . . 5, 12, 19, 26	S . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	S . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	S . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	S . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	S . . . 6, 13, 20, 27
M . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	M . . . 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	M . . . 7, 14, 21, 28	M . . . 5, 12, 19, 26	M . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	M . . . 7, 14, 21, 28
Tu . . . 7, 14, 21, 28	Tu . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	Tu . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Tu . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	Tu . . . 3, 10, 17, 24	Tu . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
W . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	W . . . 5, 12, 19, 26	W . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	W . . . 7, 14, 21, 28	W . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	W . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Th . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Th . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	Th . . . 3, 10, 17, 24	Th . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Th . . . 5, 12, 19, 26	Th . . . 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
F . . . 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	F . . . 7, 14, 21, 28	F . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	F . . . 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	F . . . 6, 13, 20, 27	F . . . 4, 11, 18, 25
S . . . 4, 11, 18, 25	S . . . 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	S . . . 5, 12, 19, 26	S . . . 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	S . . . 7, 14, 21, 28	S . . . 5, 12, 19, 26



J. W. TAYLOR

"'Ere's pay-day, George."

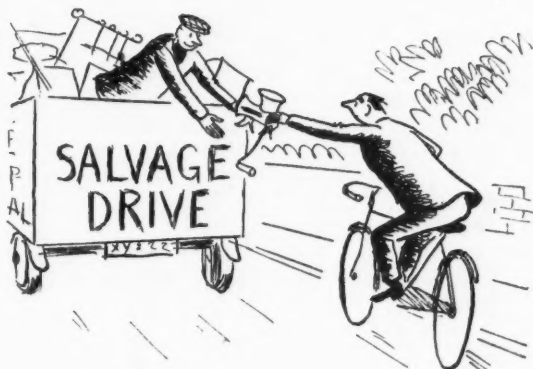


"Remind me, Mr. Wilson, to ask the Admiralty to send a few brunettes in the next batch."

[THIS IS THE LAST DRAWING CONTRIBUTED TO PUNCH BY THE LATE CHARLES GRAVE.]



"Well, Sir, all I can do now is to wish you a very good night, and 'appy dreams."



“With a Heigh! and a Ho!”

ID no idea, Miss Littlemug, that you *did* conduct choirs. I don't mean that I'm at all surprised or anything, but I just didn't know about it, that's all.”

“I dare say not, dear. It's not my way to talk much about myself, ever. As my very dear godmother—I had *two*, but this was the other one—as she used to say about me when I was a wee mite, That child is creative to her finger-tips. But the world will never know it.”

“Still, Little Fiddle-on-the-Green will know it if you're going to teach us part-songs for the concert. Can I help you at all?”

“No, dear, not really. Nobody can ever help me in any way. I'm like that. Just cast your eye over these songs, dear, and tell me what you think. *I'm Seventeen Come Sunday* is a charming thing.”

“The only thing is, Miss Littlemug, we *aren't* seventeen come Sunday. More like seventy, most of us. Even Laura hasn't been seventeen since the last war, practically.”

“Dear, what a literal mind you have! Still, if you don't care about *Seventeen Come Sunday*, do please throw it into the fire without a moment's hesitation. I shall more than understand. *Heigh ho! Riddle-me-ree with a load of barley!*”

“What did you say, Miss Littlemug?”

“I said nothing, dear. I was simply recalling a very lovely old English melody.”

“I see.”

“And in every other line we get: *Heigh ho! Riddle-me-ree with a load of barley!*”

“Really? How extraordinary our ancestors were! What did they mean by *Riddle-me-ree with a load of barley?*”

“Well, dear, it's all perfectly clear if you simply think of nothing but the music and *never* take your eye off the conductor. That's the secret of the whole thing. But I see that none of it appeals to you.”

“Honestly, Miss Littlemug, I wouldn't say that. And I never would take my eye off you, I'm certain. I do think, if you wouldn't mind my saying so, that you ought to be rather more careful about that little stick—you were terribly close to the clock with that last load of barley.”

“I'm like that, dear. Give me music and I forget everything else in the world. What about just running through *The West Wind, the West Wind, the West Wind Blows Softly* with me?”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Dear, I can tell from your voice that you don't care about it. I am never deceived by anybody for one single instant.”

“How dreadfully difficult that must make life, in a way! But honestly, I'm sure *The West Wind* must be very nice, only why do they have to say it three times?”

“We shall be doing it in parts, dear.”

I thought of Miss Pin, Miss Plum and the younger Miss Dodge—*The West Wind* pianissimo, and then perhaps the other Miss Dodge and your dear Cousin Florence, since she happens to be in the neighbourhood, and Mrs. Pledge—if she's mistaken, as I trust she may be, about being tone-deaf—taking it up crescendo—*THE WEST WIND*—and finally Mrs. Battlegate, your Aunt Emma, and anybody else we can rake up, including yourself, dear, letting themselves go quite freely and fortissimo with *THE WEST WIND*—and one and two hold it, and three—*blows softly.*”

“Oh dear, oh dear. Still, it's quite a clean break and I dare say it'll rivet, and at least it wasn't the clock.”

“Never mind, dear, we can sweep it all up afterwards. And you must remember that at the concert I shall be standing on a chair or a small stool. I do feel that's very important. Now, I want a complete contrast for the next item and I wondered what you'd think about *Oh, who will Come Hunting o'er Field and o'er Brae, Come bring out your Horn and your Saddle?*”

“I'm not perfectly certain I can absolutely see Aunt Emma and Miss Plum and Miss Dodge hunting o'er field and o'er brae—but I dare say I'm quite wrong. Perhaps one ought really not to think too much about the actual wording . . .”

“Certainly not, dear. If *Oh, who will Come Hunting* is attacked with sufficient *brío* I feel certain nobody will be able to hear the words distinctly. On the other hand, one doesn't want to stress sporting activities in a time of national crisis, and we might do better with *England the Glorious, Girt by the Wave.*”

“I don't think I know it.”

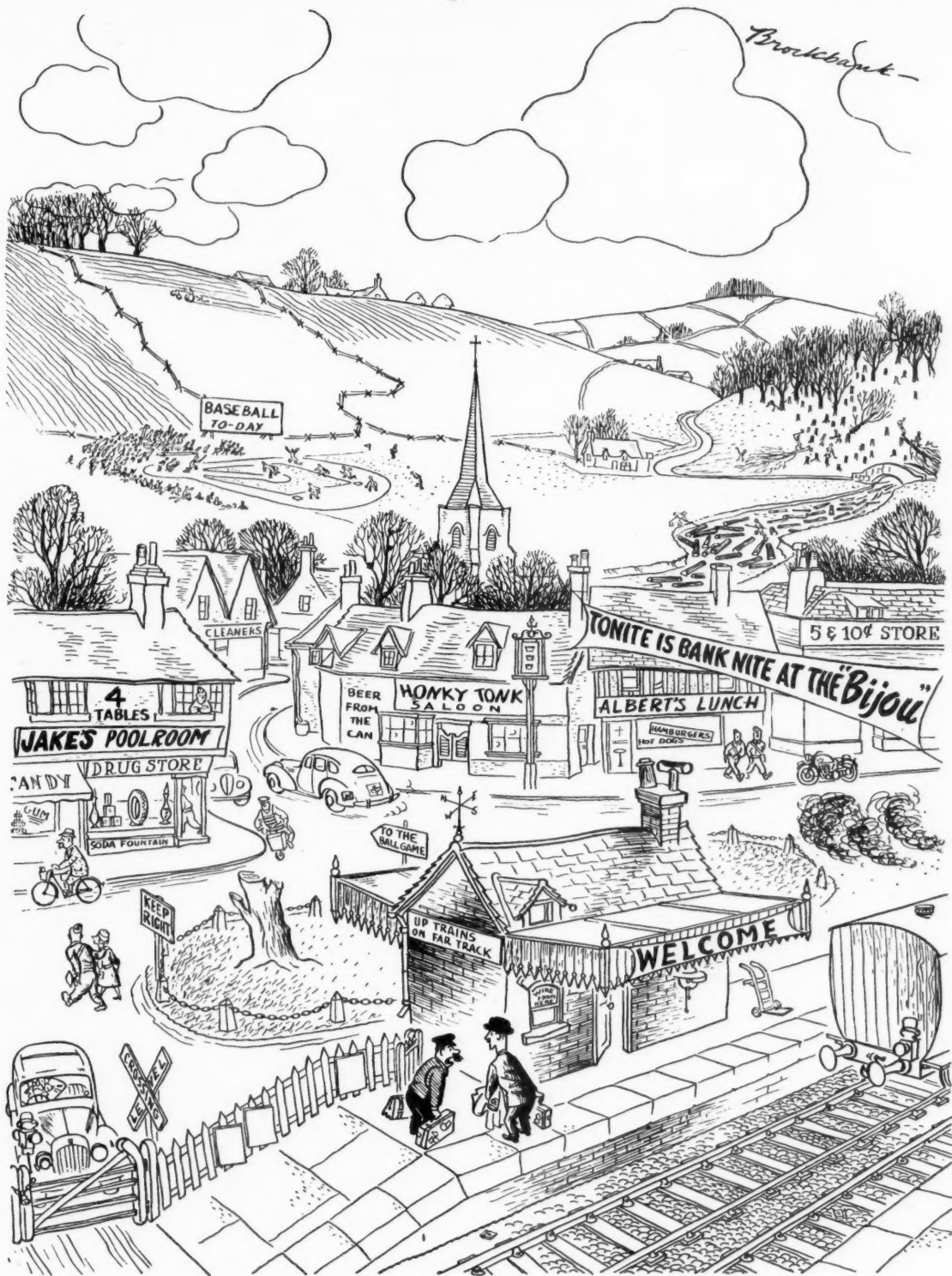
“Very few people do, dear. My Uncle James was immensely talented, musically, but met with very little recognition, unfortunately. *Ho! my lads, with a ho! and a ho! Over the wave, the wave we go, So ho! my lads, so ho!* Is anything the matter, dear?”

“Not a thing, Miss Littlemug. I—I may just have thought that *lads* wasn't quite the word, especially for Mrs. Battlegate and Aunt Emma—but that was all.”

“I think, dear, you're not quite your best and happiest self to-day. Why don't you rest quietly on the sofa, while I go through a rather beautiful Elizabethan madrigal? *Sing fol-de-rol, sing fal-la-lay!*”
E. M. D.



“In this term's re-shuffle, Mr. Winthrop takes over Lower School Latin from Mr. Griggs, who will be caretaker in place of Mr. Hollins, who becomes matron.”



"You'll see a few changes, Sir, since them Canadians moved in."



The Nelson Room



WHEN the greatest of England's
seamen fell
On the deck of the shot-swept
Victory,
They brought home the leader they loved
so well
And laid him awhile in the Admiralty:

And while men fashioned a fitting tomb
He lay at rest in a quiet room.

And though they carried his body thence
And gave it into the City's care,
He left behind him a gift immense—
His lion heart, the Navy's share . . .

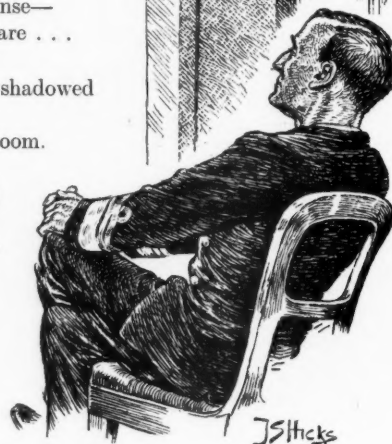
Where the sunlight pierces the shadowed
gloom
His soul lives on in that quiet room.

And if you remember the final
prayer
He wrote on his knees in the
Victory

And the things that he prayed for, kneeling there—
Honour, forbearance, humanity—

You may hear a promise of Nazi doom
If you listen awhile in the Nelson Room.

J. S. H.



JSHcks



"I find it very comforting to know that even in these times the arts of peace still flourish."



The Story of Li Pao, Lucky Star and the Intruding Stranger

(By the Author of "The Wallet of Kai Lung")

THE story of Li Pao might be regarded as the history of one whose life covered the period of the Three-fold Struggle—an almost legendary epoch when our flower-strewn but imperishable Empire was slowly awakening to the danger of crediting less scrupulous Powers with the same fidelity to spoken or thumb-signed pacts as that which marked her own punctilious Rulers. The reference to an unexpected visitor, however, suggests that the narrative must be primarily connected with an incident in the middle period of Li Pao's career, during the hostilities arising from the rude and tyrannical Uans' treacherous bid to usurp world-wide power by reducing all neighbouring lands to the condition of vassal states, and those of an indulgent circle of listeners who are so excessively polite as to remain awake to the end will realize that this inference is feasible.

Immersed in his life-long preoccupation—that of expressing the most lucid apophthegms in the obscurest possible language—Li Pao had hitherto regarded with only a negligible concern the progress of military strife, and the incursion of the marauding Uans under their loose-mouthed and grotesquely-outlined chieftain Ng-ho diminished if anything his ambition to acquire martial lustre. To the under-captain of an enrolling band, who sought him out to classify his powers, Li Pao replied that the formality was legally outside the official scope since he himself was one of those who maintained a conscientious antipathy to the exercise of force, whatever the provocation.

"Yet," urged the official in a persuasive tone, "consider well the outcome. You have here what this one would unhesitatingly describe as an agreeable if restricted place of abode; an attractive companion of the other sort lurks in the adjacent background, and you doubtless either have, or look forward with reasonable expectation to having, a virile Line of lusty sons to worship your unfading memory. Positioned thus, would you not cast in the weight of a strenuous arm to thwart those who seek to dispossess you?"

While considering the formulation of his reply Li Pao placed before the under-captain a generous measure of rich peach wine after receiving an assurance from the one concerned that his mind was not absolutely opposed to such a proceeding.

"The situation might be described in a variety of ways by the application of a diversity of analogies," explained Li Pao when they had sufficiently reciprocated compliments

and each expressed a wish that the other might live for ever. "Perhaps the aptest would be to recall the pronouncement of the philosopher Tzu-pang when he awoke from an admonitory dream one night to find two demons, one seated on either side his couch, contending about his future. 'If this person's ultimate destiny lies at the mercy of the argumentative qualities of a couple of secondary Beings,' he is reported to have exclaimed, 'he will henceforth direct a course of life irrespective of the Eternal Mandates.'"

To this, which in Li Pao's eyes had the appearance of being conclusive, the under-captain assented frankly that it required every description of personage to constitute a universe, and then, having the mischance to overturn his cup, he expressed a gratified surprise that it was at the time, as he irrefutably disclosed, empty of any liquid.

"Thus guided," continued Li Pao, after he had replenished the cup, despite the under-captain's determined efforts to prevent him, "the line of this one's conduct in the existing emergency is unflinching. Armed with any fatal implement of assault, he would cheerfully take up a position five-score or more paces from the most redoubtable among the Uanish horde—including the obscene Ng-ho himself if available—and continue to exchange lethal missiles across that space until one or the other fell mortally stricken."

"Disclose yourself more freely," was the doubtfully-voiced response. "Why should you then hesitate to take up arms and join a company of your heroic fellows?"

"By acting as he has set forth, either Li Pao or his selected opponent must Pass Hence, and thereby he fulfils the primary object of modern warfare. Thus he achieves all that is to be gained by resorting to arms and at the same time avoids the distressing contingency of possibly finding himself during the stress of battle locked in a noisome embrace—perhaps even clasped thigh to thigh—with an unsavoury and coarse-mannered rebel. To Pass Upwards is as the Predestined Word ordains, but to appear before one's decorous and high-born ancestors inextricably locked in the contaminating grasp of an Outland thug distends the normal limit."

* * * * *

It will readily be understood, even from the meagre evidence of this encounter, that Li Pao was not a person who was likely to be greeted with effusion by an assembly of those whose chief delight lay in witnessing athletic

contests. He had been nourished on the literary style and adages of an earlier dynasty, and whatever the normal passer-by extolled produced in his internal organs an emotion of acute revulsion. Especially was this the case with the remarks of those who, on Li Pao's behalf, referred to the output of really successful essay writers and demanded of him whether he could not, by studying their form, in time acquire something approaching an equal proficiency and thereby ultimately receive at the rate of silver taels where he was now grudgingly accorded an insufficiency of copper pieces.

To this well-intentioned advice Li Pao at first replied by a few carefully selected sentences, accompanying, however, an arrangement of his face that left it ambiguous in what exact sense his spoken words were to be regarded. Later he replied more definitely by describing that which he was bidden to emulate as nothing but the inner membrane of a defunct cow's digestive entrails, coupling this with the assertion that it would rend him internally as with barbed hooks of steel if by any chance he should be found devoid of life in proximity with such contaminating offal.

"Yet, Delight of all Beholders, your nobly-connected relatives and those of my own obscurely-descended clan grasp the bamboo by its inaccurate end when they charge this really complaisant person with obstinacy and inertness," maintained Li Pao when Lucky Star, his lesser part, hastened towards him with a cooling draught after one of these occasions. "So far from it being his deliberate purpose to despise riches or to repudiate fame, he is reasonably prepared to endure both, and any of the other burdens of exceptional popular acclaim—if it can be arranged on an honourable basis."

"What, then, is this formidable obstacle that stands in the way of our enhanced estate?" inquired Keih Sing, with an affectionate adjustment of Pao's ruffled pigtail. "Surely if it is anything where human prowess may avail, my all-conquering lord will be able to convince demons."

"Your words are gemmed with accuracy and sense," admitted Pao modestly, "and did it rest with him alone a golden pagoda roofed with translucent amethyst would be your dwelling-place to-morrow."

"The limit of this one's reasonable expectation tends towards a pleasantly-situated and flower-encrusted bower, where the outcome of mutual affection might find adequate room to expand and flourish," was Keih Sing's meek disclaimer. "As things are positioned, however, we are restricted to the uppermost space beneath the heat-engendering roof of a third-rate pallet-and-early-rice establishment. Surely if the impediment to which reference has been made can be thrust aside—"

"Therein you penetrate to the nucleus of the matter and strike the spigot of our difficulty upon its thicker end," exclaimed Li Pao with convincing fervour. "It is not to be expected that one who is admittedly producing masterpieces of scintillating texture should voluntarily renounce his style—a style whereby he can with ease employ three long words in circumstances where every other contemporary essayist would find it beyond his power to press in more than one of a single syllable—in order to conform to the degenerate standard of an illiterate epoch. Let those who now devour the crude and arid commonplaces of Tin-hi, Kow Hang and other so-described 'most wanteds' remove the wax of complacency from their indiscriminating ears and cultivate an uplifting taste for classical prolixity. Then this neglected and obscure arranger of appropriate words would find his, so to speak, stock in the literary mart resounding with an upward trend, whereat the producers of inscribed leaves, who now affect to be engaged with high officials when he submits his worthless name, would come

forward with outstretched hands, carrying agreements in blank at the first tidings of his presence."

* * * * *

The union of Li Pao and Lucky Star has been aptly described as an instance of affection at the initial glance, for having noted her graceful but at the same time self-reliant poise when, for several gong-strokes, they stood side to side in a stress occasioned by the whispered word that at a certain stall within a limited supply of congealed fat was available, he lost no opportunity to engage her imagination. When, at a later period, he was able to claim her hand, not only did Keih Sing fulfil all Li Pao's expectations but she modestly disclosed a variety of engaging arts of which—deeply immersed in his themes—the reclusive essayist had never up to that time suspected the existence. For his part he strove to assure her of his regard by imparting an added excellence to whatever he undertook and attributing it to her presence. This chiefly concerned his apophthegms, which thereby became increasingly verbose and involved, and although the improvement diminished their scanty means, since fewer and fewer could be induced to purchase his work, Lucky Star never failed to applaud each one in turn as Li Pao explained to her its merits, while at the same time she foretold for him an imperishable future. Let no reproach for this be laid to Keih Sing's charge, for though she might—and in fact did—fail to grasp the significance of any single point in all Pao's efforts, the element of gratitude she felt that he should have chosen her from among the countless thousands of her own sort invested him with all the attributes of a Superior Being. Apart from serving Pao her chief delight lay in persuading any of the feathered creatures of the air to alight at her open



"It was her charitable habit to scatter crumbs and fragments . . ."

shutter, and for this purpose she contrived a projecting ledge on which it was her charitable habit to scatter such crumbs and fragments of discarded meat as might be spared from her own inadequate platter. While regarding this as a harmless and even to a slight degree a gravity-removing fancy on her part, Li Pao felt that it would perhaps have been more in keeping with their present need if she had by the same means enticed in larger and more meaty birds which would have brought a welcome addition to their ill-spread table.

* * * * *

Meanwhile the press of battle had so far advanced that it was no unusual thing for contending bands of warriors to congest the outer Ways and to disarrange the legitimate

business of the countryside and city. Requiring to be fed, they soon produced a state of siege, so that presently a general shortage reared its head, while the far-seeing and astute sped from mart to mart unostentatiously amassing a stock of what they deemed would next be most in demand, and as they met and passed freely execrating so detestable a practice in all others. To maintain a seemly balance whereby the affluent should not possess all that was essential to the community at large and the more necessitous be able to procure nothing, the high officials devised a system of issuing bamboo slips on which were described the commodities most sought as well as the amount to which each person was entitled at a given date, and undoubtedly the expedient would have restored a more normal trend had not the harassed authorities overlooked the need of also providing the requisite supply of viands.

To add to the popular concern and lack of poise a variety of rumours began to spread, some attributing to the oncoming Uans a diversity of unnatural powers, others claiming for their own armed force an even greater preponderance of victory-bringing Omens. Thus Chow Mang-hi, supreme War Lord of the Uans, had claimed the possession of an undisclosed device that would make resistance futile, and while some asserted that this pointed to a rare and



"... at once assumed a defiant pose and drew a keen-edged sword."

potent drug, by which men drinking it became invisible and fought unseen, others, who had it from influential friends in a position to know, disclosed that the boast referred to the magic and long-lost shears of Umph which endowed with life and all its attributes figures of a never-ending warrior host cut out from sheets of paper. Moved by such tales, not a few declared it hopeless to contend and counselled an unaggressive compact whereby Mang-hi would become a fostering ally, but an overwhelming number rejected so pusillanimous a front, claiming that even then a relieving army from a distant alien State was marching to their aid, since Outland men, speaking an uncouth tongue and wearing long beards, who could, moreover, drink liquid fire, had on good authority been seen throughout the Province.

* * * * *

Unaffected by the general stress and sway, Li Pao continued to elaborate his style and contrived paraphrases

of more and more diffuseness, while Lucky Star remained content to serve his hand and day after day to eke out their meagre store to the utmost limits of its sparse dimensions. Thus positioned, Pao was recording his lofty thoughts by the uncertain glimmer of a single waxed thread one night, with his lesser one pounding acorns in a bowl, when the sound of a heavy body striking the latter one's alighting shelf outside brought the immediate task of both to a sharp-edged finish.

"This would seem to promise a fowl of considerably larger growth than has hitherto filled our ration—possibly a Kien-fi goose exhausted on its homeward flight or even a storm-tossed peacock," exclaimed Li Pao, casting aside his tablets with a hopeful look and taking up instead a weighty cleaver. "Throw open the shutter suddenly, Adored," and he assumed a suitable attitude of defence at a convenient distance.

"Yet seeing that the protection of our roof has been sought, is it permissible, despite the stringency of our case, so to dispose of one who might claim sanctuary?" pleaded Keih Sing with gentle reluctance.

To this no doubt Li Pao would have replied by an appropriate and convincing verse had not the shutter-fastening at that moment incapably failed to retain its hold, thus permitting the entry of a large and disordered man whose unwieldy bulk and degenerate type of face proclaimed him to be a Uan of the most repellent description. What appeared to be the remains of a badly-made umbrella hung about his loins, and as he stumbled in he held both hands submissively above his head, at the same time maintaining that he was desirous of associating in friendship with any there and willingly yielded himself into their keeping. Becoming accustomed to the light, however, and discovering their strength, he at once assumed a defiant pose and drew a keen-edged sword.

"Since you are but two," he declared, "and neither of martial build, the position is reversed and he who speaks will decide the issue."

"It would be useless to deny what is so convincingly advanced," replied Li Pao, and he replaced his ineffectual cleaver on its hook, as the intruder made several near-miss thrusts with his formidable weapon. "If it is not too much to ask, as the matter stands, would you spare sufficient of your no doubt precious time to reveal what manner of man you are and why you should have elected to come up to our far from attractive tenement home at all, and that by so exacting an approach when there exists a conveniently arranged inside ladder?"

"Is it possible that this outline is unknown to you, despite the continuous efforts of the gravity-remover face-depicters of every civilized nation—this loose-lipped mouth, these protuberant hard-boiled eyes, these fan-like ears, this fatuous look, unwieldy bulk, exaggerated warrior garb and, to add a conclusive wedge, this triple row of valour-proclaiming badges? Is it credible that any outpost is so remote, or two, not apparently in a certifiable state, so benighted?"

"Ng-ho!" exclaimed both in a single voice, "Chief of the Strategy of Invasion. How does it befall that one so very high up in authority should inconvenience himself to the extent of dropping in, as it were, with this flattering lack of ceremony upon two so devoid of any shred of influence?"

"Since you have removed an uneasy doubt that he might not be so notorious as he had hoped, your very natural curiosity may now, without too much indiscretion, be sated," replied Ng-ho, lowering the point of his hitherto aggressive blade and courteously indicating by means of a downward sweep that they might sit upon the floor. "At

this moment, as we talk, countless intrepid warriors of the pure Uanish strain are descending in your midst to await this one's rallying call, when they will disperse on a preconceived plan and seize all the points of most advantage."

"This is sufficiently astonishing in any case," declared Li Pao, who, despite his apophthegms, was not really sluggish-minded and now desired to learn as much as could be gathered; "for the gates being closed and the walls well-manned, how will this infiltrating host reach our midst, or, alternatively, you, being here, be able to pass out and join them?"

"That concerns our ever-to-be-venerated Chief" (here Ng-ho paused to throw a variety of occult signs, and he also knocked his head three times against the nearest wall in token of abject submission) "and involves his hidden weapon. The position now being thus and thus, it is permissible to explain that our revered Leader's hitherto unknown contrivance involves the use of parchment sacks which, distended by a new and miraculously-endowed sort of air, assume the quality of volitation. Each clinging to one of these, and aided by a favouring wind, picked warriors of our intrepid Panther Guard can pass undetected over barriers of the most impregnable strength and then, fearlessly casting themselves free, descend in safety by merely pressing the spring of a self-opening umbrella."

"This then is the secret of your arrival on our inaccessible window-sill," exclaimed Li Pao, rising in his well-merited sense of indignation—"not ascending as normally would an honoured guest, but descending like a stealthy vampire!"

"That is the regrettable outcome of this one's want of experience in the wind," confessed Ng-ho, "in that he cast off a few beats of time before it was intended. No doubt official regrets for the intrusion will be expressed if a definite complaint is made on a duly authorized form and submitted to the proper quarter. Although this war is being waged on an all-embracing scale that spares neither young nor old, no Uan warrior wearing the sacred emblem of our divine Commander-at-the-Head would wittingly deviate by so much as the width of a naiad's eyelash from the severest military usage."

"Hitherto this person has borne a strictly neutral part," declared Li Pao, "swaying, as befits one who balances antitheses as a juggler does brimming cups of boiling tea, neither to the one side nor the other. But this irruption of winged men from the Upper Space transcends the normal code, inasmuch as it now assumes the elements of a struggle between Beings and ordinary beings. In such a case one of the latter has no choice but to range himself with his own kind, according to the Rule of Yaou as laid down in his imperishable Edict."

Speaking in this compact but temperate strain and moving in a very natural way, Li Pao crossed over to a shelf that held his few though noticeably heavy books and from among these he selected a volume of the weightiest proportions. Advancing this he approached Ng-ho, but instead of displaying the indicated page as that one somewhat obtusely took for granted, he dexterously swung the formidable mass with a quite unexpected force and struck the dull-witted Invasion Chief at the vulnerable point where his over-swollen neck joined his offensively obese body. Deprived of any latent reserve of power by years of self-indulgence, the discreditable example of unrestricted Uan rule sank incapably upon the rough-hewn floor and closed his ill-matched eyes in oblivion.

"Alas!" exclaimed Keih Sing, looking down on that which lay there with some foreboding, "how embarrassing an alternative confronts us now, for we must either keep

the extremely inopportune Chieftain here until his proximity becomes oppressive or else contrive a scheme to dispose unostentatiously of his by no means inconspicuous body."

"Have no fear on that account," replied Li Pao, "but disentangle the cord from which our recently purified garments at present depend while this one stands guard upon our illustrious guest with the now effective chopper."

When Ng-ho had been inextricably bound—and in his determination to leave no contingency to chance Li Pao encased him from head to foot in a swathe of cordage—that one unbarred the door and taking up his staff and a swinging light went forth to complete his mission. To Lucky Star he left the custody of Ng-ho meanwhile, directing her to stand



"... repairing Pao's scanty footwear to pass the time in thrift."

above him with the cleaving-knife and should he attempt to shake off his bonds to strike him until he became supine again, but as humanely as it might be done and at first with the blunt side of the weapon. This Keih Sing undertook implicitly.

As Li Pao traversed the now almost deserted Ways, composing a variety of apophthegms based on so unusual a doing, he encountered one here and there deviously clad, who asked how to reach a certain point where, each claimed, he was to meet another with whom he had urgent matters. Recognizing these to be disguised Uans by their correct but laboured speech, Li Pao replied in courteous terms and sent them in wrong directions.

At the outer gate of the Office of Warlike Deeds he was met by a custodian who barred the way until, as he recalled Li Pao and the flavour of his jar of wine, the features of that one changed to an expression from which gravity was lacking.

"Lo, here is he who disdained to mingle in the press of strife but would engage to vanquish the redoubtable Ng-ho if it could be arranged on an amicable basis," exclaimed the under-captain—for so it was—to an over-captain who had drawn near to listen. "Doubtless the import of his message is that this has now been done and nothing remains but to hang out the banners."

"It is not unaptly said," replied Li Pao, "except the reference to waving flags, that being opposed to this one's literary code as germinant of self-laudation."

"Is it not as your underling described when he spoke of this one before?" was passed in a muffled voice. "It would be as profitable to catch eels on a spade as to pursue the sequence of his actual meaning."

"Be that as it might," was Li Pao's modest boast, "the encounter took place as—more or less—he who now speaks prescribed, and it only needs those in authority to come and remove the fallen."

It was some while before Li Pao could induce those who now gathered round to regard what he had to tell as anything but an austerity-dispelling narrative, while his claim to Uans descending in sacks compelled even the most sombre to relax their waistbands. But presently first one and then another spoke haltingly of seeing this or hearing that, until a doubt began to spread which soon gave place to credence. By this time a bodyguard of fearless Iron-caps had been called out and told to advance with caution, but when it was understood that Lucky Star, provided with a keen-edged knife, stood over the Uan Chief's insensate form, confidence returned and the advance became a valiant scramble.

Quick as the movement was, rumour had gone before and at the barrier of his outer door a surging throng was pressing. Many of these applauded Li Pao as he passed through, though without understanding who he was or what part he had in the entertainment for which they deemed they had gathered. As they went up the narrow stair the melodious voice of the one on guard could be heard chanting an appropriate ballad of love and war, and then they saw that she had laid aside the cleaving blade and was repairing Pao's scanty footwear to pass the time in thrift, but otherwise everything was as he had left it.

"Li Pao," declared the over-captain when he had looked into Ng-ho's unsightly face and suitably expressed his contempt for that one's prowess, "you have made good your claim and in due course—provided nothing untoward steps in—you will no doubt be agreeably surprised by the bestowal of an adequate recognition. Whether this should take the form of an official degree, a pink-lined chair, some mark of honour appended to your worthy if no-longer-among-us father's distinguished name, or the graciously-conveyed permission to cover your own hands with feather-trimmed gloves, it might be presumptuous to conjecture."

"If," said an assertive voice—for the room was now filled with any who would, thrust upwards by the others—"if you are that Li Pao whose unread themes are to be found in the two-cash receptacles of all the discarded printed-leaf dealers of the city, a more solid reward awaits you. Obscure and ill-paid to-day, to-morrow you will find your commonplace name will be in every mouth and—for no logical reason, let it be freely said—countless thousands

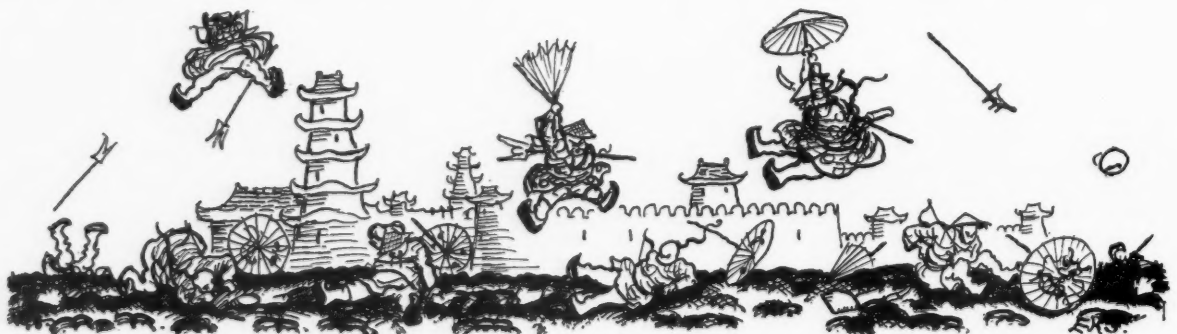
will hasten to buy your neglected essays. He who speaks thus definitely is 'Long Ear' of the 'This Person Told You So' paragraphs in the Tang Whang *Daily Heaven-sent Leaf of Truth*, who will be among the first to resound your achievement. When you have become a 'most wanted' and have anything exclusive to make known, do not forget the debt of this obligation."

"Restrain your facile brush," besought Pao, "and let a moist sponge be drawn across the tablets of your voracious memory. It is far from this one's wish or thought to profit by the chance outcome of something not even remotely connected with his unique attainments."

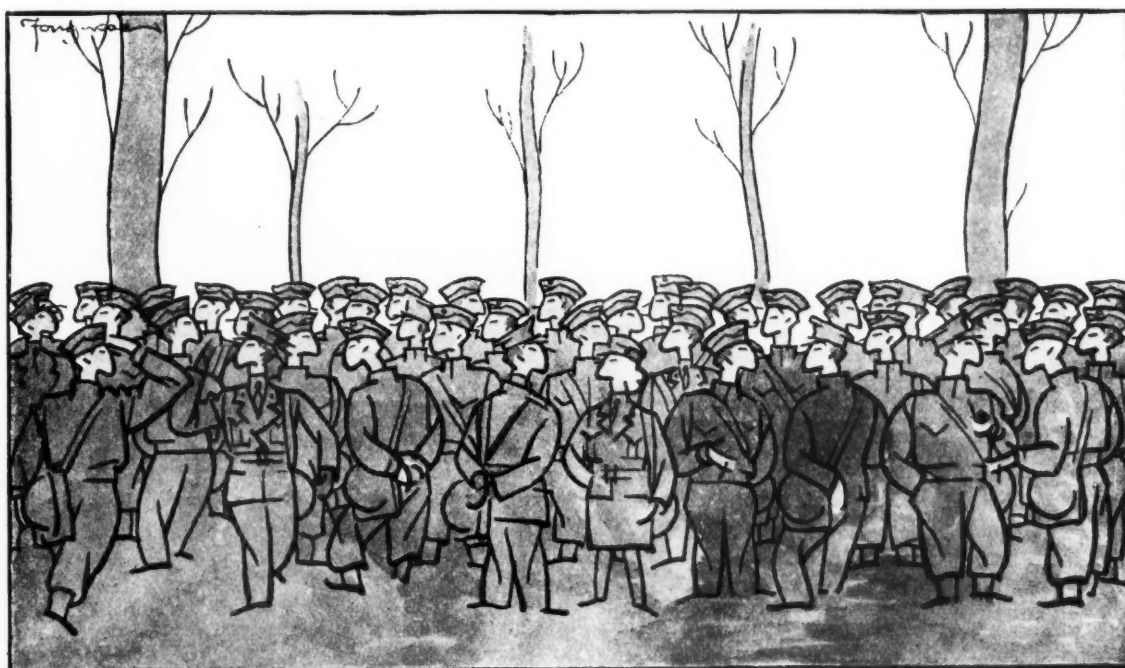
"That, no doubt, is one facet of your present case, Li Pao," assented the recorder of passing things, "but let this one remind you that there is equally another. Those who daily scan the *Heaven-sent Truth* have a reasonable claim to be admitted into the precincts of whatever goes on, whether it involves intrusion upon the occupants of a pigsty or a palace. Added to this, he who speaks has not left a restful couch and stumbled upon a priceless 'swoop' to be set captiously aside by the passing whim of any; whereunto also his exertions to-night will assure a complete moon's rice for a deserving and ever-clamorous family of eleven."

"Behold how an ordinary person may become enmeshed in the converging lines of fate by which his present state is entirely opposed to what he had striven for through a well-spent life of effort," exclaimed Li Pao, imposing silence on all by the undoubted sincerity of his message. "For several decades the one who speaks has scattered gems of authentic lore with an ungrudging hand upon a wholly unresponsive public. While never endeavouring to grasp the hem of Fortune's cloak, neither would he have turned churlishly aside from the due reward of industry had an approximate return been offered. . . . Observe his careworn look and threadbare garb, the incongruous roughness of a devoted helpmeet's hand and the stark inadequacy of this ill-provided chamber. Yet to-day, by the mere mischance of an utterly negligible warrior chief—destitute of any literary quality whatever—descending on his inopportune window-sill, he is to be thrust into the forefront of the hanging lantern's glare and destined to suffer the indignity of becoming a 'most wanted.' To whatever extremity of conduct it may lead be well assured that Li Pao, secure in the pronouncement of generations hence, will devise some subterfuge by which to escape so detestable a climax."

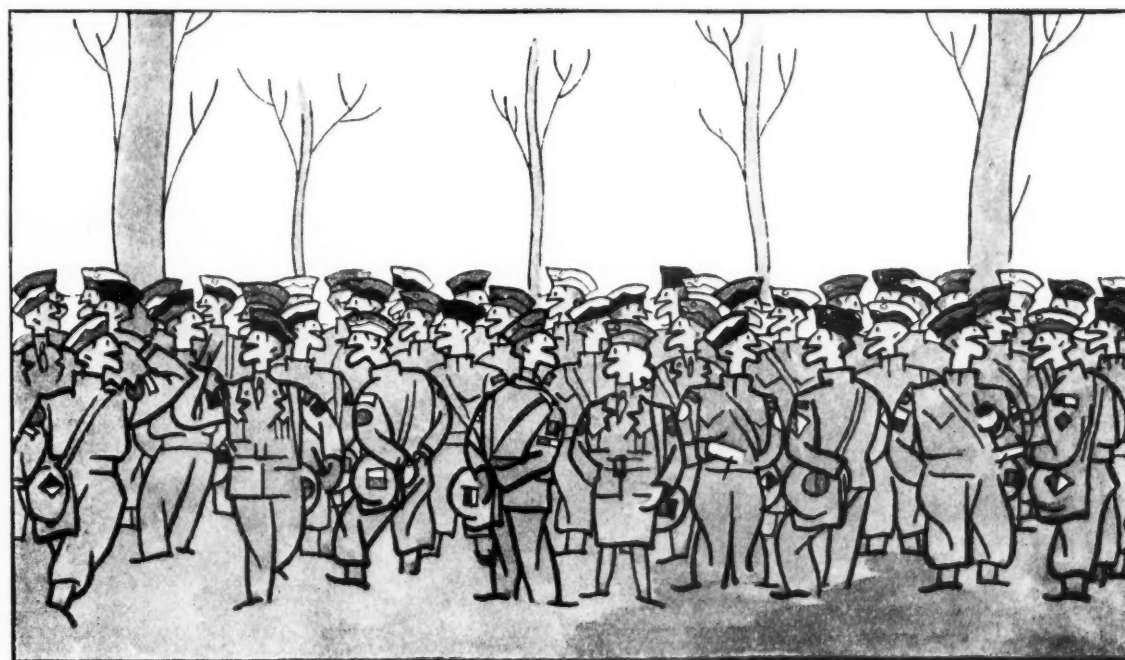
"It only remains to add," concluded Kai Lung, "that, by whatever means, the inflexible Li Pao must have succeeded in his effort. No reference to his work exists in the contemporary record of his day, while by the Satire of Destiny, in the light of what he claimed, his name has been equally unknown at any subsequent period."



ANOTHER CHANGING FACE
NATURE'S REVOLT AGAINST THE DRABNESS OF EXISTENCE



1939



1941



"Yes, we allowed one of our artist customers to work off his overdraft."



Trooper Doughty Leaves to Rejoin his Regiment, 1742



506249 Doughty S. D. gets back to barracks, 1942





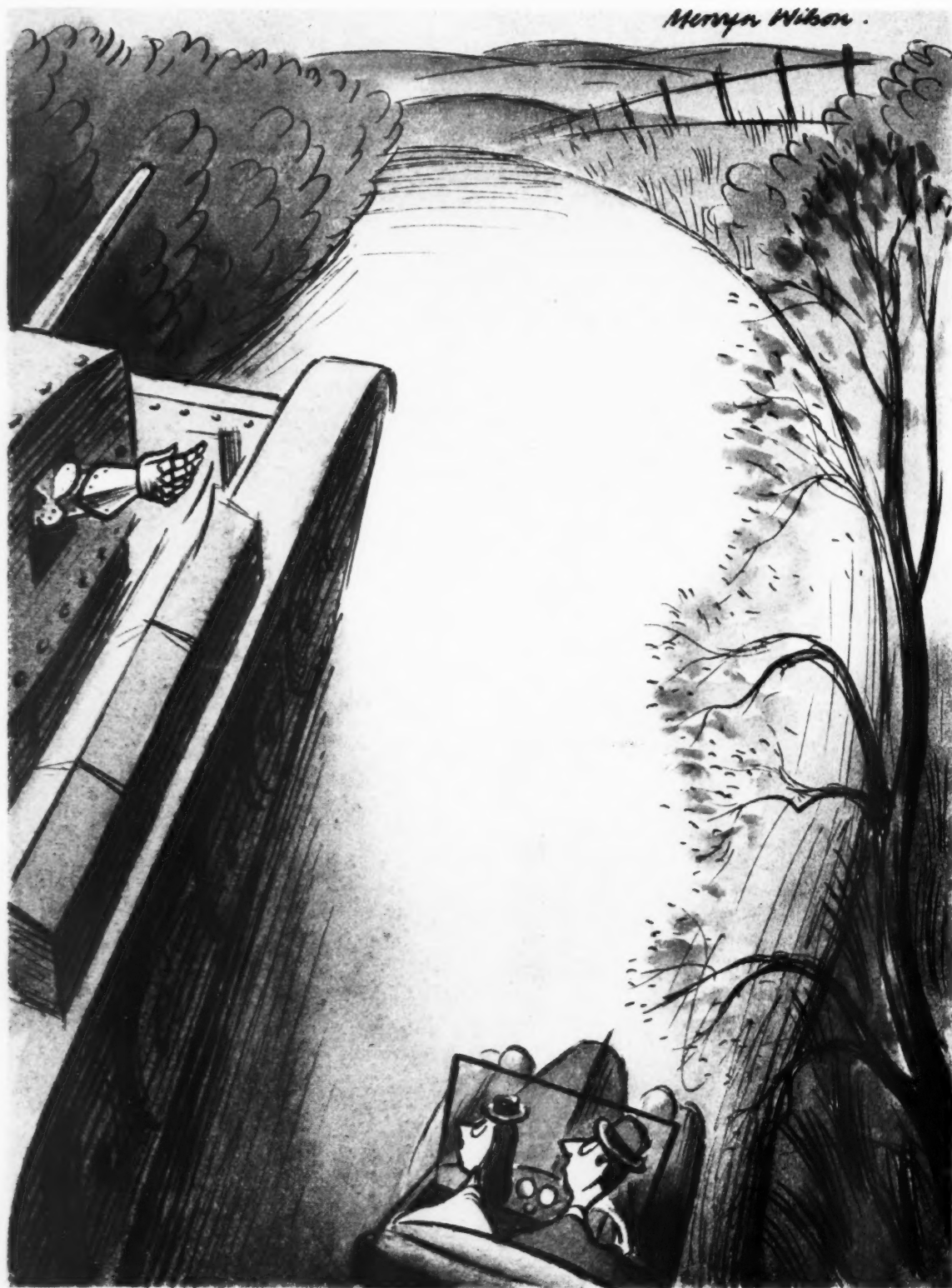


"It's going to be very awkward if we can't get rid of this bailiff's man."



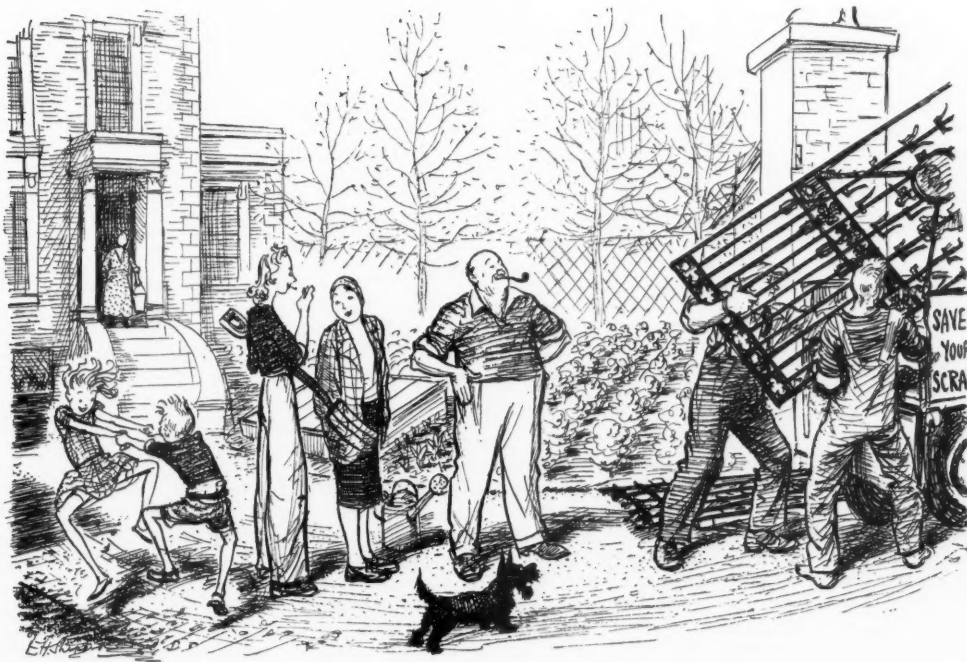
"I'm sorry, Mrs. Pringle, but we're clean out of bananas."

Merryn Wilson.





THE NEW GATES



THE OLD GATES

These are the Facts.

"THE Club?" I say blankly nowadays. "Never go there. I've resigned."

And I may as well confess at once that it was I who smashed the assegai presented by Colonel Pophame (1886) that lately hung outside the library. Fellow-members may recall the notice which followed the Committee meeting:

"A valuable article of Club property has lately been subjected to an act of vandalism. Actions of this character (which the Committee cannot understand) must cease. Face towels must be placed in the appropriate basket after use."

My resignation was never connected with the above incident, but the passage of time has convinced me that a full confession and explanation are due.

I can only say that I entered the Club that afternoon with no blacker intention than that of reading some tip-top yarn in the library. Nothing could have been more normal than my entry. I read the news on the ticker (Britain on top), glanced at the menu (curried chicken), and looked for letters (none). Before ascending the staircase I asked after the hall-porter's wife (gout).

There is a large notice at the entrance to the library which says SILENCE. I paused beneath it and surveyed the field—Bingo Jackson in the leather arm-chair, the Commander near the writing-table, General Fulby (looking wonderfully fit) in the bay with "Blackwoods," a couple of ostrich eggs reading the daily paper, and, for the rest, two John Buchans, a Boswell's "Life of Johnson" and a "History of Babylon." Not, you will agree, the sort of mad, dare-devil crowd that could be expected to indulge in the sort of horseplay that broke an assegai.

There was a chair next the Commander. I reached it with only a couple of creaks and a strong look from the "History of Babylon." The Commander acknowledged me—that is to say, he lifted his eyebrows. I drooped my mouth in return. I now felt established.

Fortunately my predecessor in the chair had left behind one of those smooth, shiny magazines full of weddings, race meetings and pudding-faced army officers. This was just as well because no one in the library likes you to go scrabbling about the shelves looking for books. I took the

magazine gladly, opened it, and there—on page xxiii—was a photograph of Ronny Bisket!

Now I don't know if it's the same with you, but if ever I see a photograph of somebody whom I know in one of these magazines I have an irresistible inclination to point it out. Often, of course, it is only a blurred face at the back of a football-team or one of "Officers of an R.A.F. Station." None the less, I rather like to mention it casually and push the paper across.

For some minutes I struggled with this temptation. I told myself that I had only known Ronny Bisket at school and couldn't stand the fellow. I turned the pages on Countess after Countess in uniform. In vain. The temptation was too strong. I showed the picture to the Commander.

"Ronny Bisket," I hissed. "Was at school with him."

The Commander has, I always think, a simple taste in literature. He likes a full-blooded story, and if there is a naval hero, so much the better. (This afternoon it was a green-backed volume and my eye caught a few sentences: "Fine lines showed on the Commander's tanned, handsome face. 'Get aft,' he rapped, 'and bring back Pete.'")

It was small wonder, then, that he looked quite annoyed. He stared at Ronny Bisket for a moment, nodded, and then, to my dismay, he began to turn the pages of the magazine.

I don't know if you have noticed this habit in people: you refer them casually to your magazine, they look at it politely, and then it is lost for the next hour. This happened now. Not only did the Commander study the Countesses attentively, he forgot all about his own book and settled down to the short story.

I was marooned. There was nothing else to hand but one of those financial papers full of articles about frozen credits. It may mean something to you that Universal Jam, Inc., is soaring: to me—no.

In despair I looked about me. "Blackwood's" was rising rhythmically (all those fine-pointed phrases!) on the General's waistcoat, the ostrich eggs had toppled and the "History of Babylon" was down for the count. Only Boswell's "Johnson" seemed unaffected by the prevailing torpor. To add insult to injury, the Commander then succumbed with my magazine in his grip.

Then the "Life of Johnson" began to giggle.

I could bear the General's now resounding snores, but the giggling tried me sorely. It's not merely that Doctor Johnson, who, after all, was very much in the habit of saying such things as "Nay, Sir, both," never strikes me as a subject for hysterical laughter, but the giggling itself annoys me. I wait for it, I see the mouth twitch, and then that sound like tearing calico!

My only course was to ring for tea.

The Club serves quite simple teas—just a pot and some toast on a tray—and John, the servant, always seems to know exactly where the creaks in the boards are.

The appearance of the tea raised my spirits—I felt almost in the marauding mood that could make me reach the shelves and snatch forth a tip-top yarn of some kind. I raised the pot and the tea gurgled pleasantly forth. And then an unfortunate thing happened—the teaspoon rattled in the saucer.

Immediately there was a stir. It was like the first breath of spring in a beavers' kennel. "Blackwood's" stopped its reciprocating motion on the General's waistcoat, the ostrich eggs jerked upwards and the Commander opened his eyes slowly and then closed them again.

But the toast finished it. Unwarily I lifted a piece to my mouth. There was a crunching noise. Fatal! The whole library seemed to be looking at me. I bit again. It was as if I were tearing up the floorboards and breaking them across my knee. In despair, I turned to my tea. Gulp, gulp, gulp. Deafening! Earsplitting! The General stared, the ostrich eggs turned in their chairs, revealing prominent features and double chins. Even Boswell's "Johnson" stopped giggling and had a long meditative look.

This was too much. The desperate unfairness of the situation overwhelmed me. I stood up and tramped out of the room and there was the assegai. I suppose for those mad minutes my social conscience must have disappeared. I took the assegai and broke it.

Everyone must have heard. I can only suppose they thought I was finishing the toast outside.

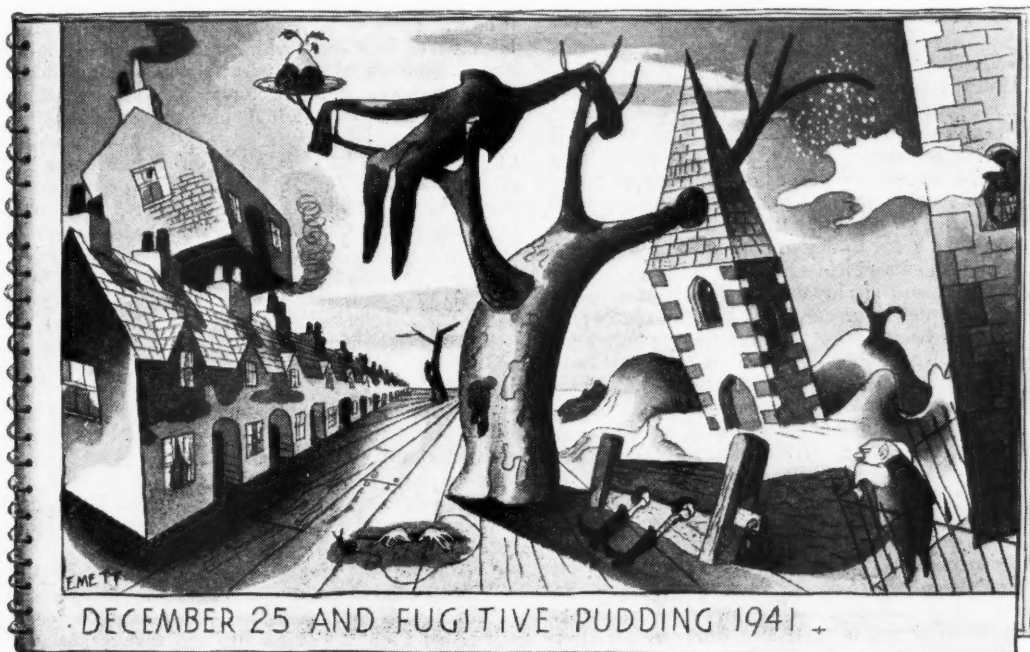
o o

"Free to good home, Labrador Dog, 2½ ears, intelligent, affectionate; house trained."—*Adv. in Westmorland Paper.*

But of odd appearance.



When Basil Subterfuge said he was SURE our village was in for a proper Christmas-card Christmas—



—one rather hopes he didn't mean the kind of Christmas-card he usually produces himself.



"I see the Johnsons have got their new billiard table."

The Haunted Chaimber

(By Smith Minor)

WARNING.

Unless you are a soljier or a sailer or an aerman, a part of this will frighten you.* This dosen't mean you won't want to read it. It's a funny thing but some poeple like being frightened if, say, they are sitting in a comfortabe chair by, say, a warm fire with, say, a drink. So if the gentel reader hapens to be one of these it's all right, he or she can go on. But if not, then don't.

I tried what I am going to tell you on one rather nervous boy to see if he cuold stand it, he feints at rats and spiders, paying him sevenpence if he cuold or ninepence if he cuoldn't, and he turned so green it took him four and a half (4½) hours to turn back again. I thort he'd changed his colour for life, and so did he, it gave us a narsty turn. Mind you, he wasn't anything speshul to begin with, a sort of pasty yellow, but however you start you want to go on the same, don't you, anyhow he did, and he was jolly bucked when the green went. We cuoldn't deside if he'd stood it or not, so I gave him eigtpence.

End of warning.

Well, it hapened two Christmasses ago, when I was a small boy, well, smaller, and when I was envited to spend the feastive season, as they say, with some poeple named, honestly, Fiddlecombe. I don't often get envited to places, being rather dull (to look at, anyway), and as a matter of fact I only got envited this time becorse they thort I was someone else. You see, there's another boy

with the same name at my school. But they didn't find out untill I acktually arrived, and then we cuoldn't any of us think how to get out of it.

"Who are you?" said Mrs. Fiddlecombe.

"Smith," I said.

"Oh, you can't be," she said.

"I must be," I said. "I always have been."

"Well, you've certainly changed," she said. "Come in, George."

"Oh, I see," I said. "I'm not G. Smith, I'm J. Smith."

"Dear me," she said.

"Yes, it's orkword," I said. "Perhaps you make your Gs like Js, some people do. Had I better go back again?"

"What, in this snow?" she said.

"I like snow," I said.

"I wuoldn't dream of it," she said.

"But can you have someone you didn't expectt," I said, "becorse (1) you don't know him, (2) he dosen't know you, and (3) what about beds?"

"You can sleep where George was going to sleep," she said.

"I see," I said, "but that still leaves (1) and (2). Once we had someone we didn't expectt, and he was orful."

"I don't think you're orful," she said.

"One dosen't at first," I said. "If it comes, it comes afterwards."

"I'll risk it," she said.

"Well, if you will, of corse I will," I said.

And then I went in.

But I didn't sleep in George's room,* becorse I had hardly got inside the door when another visiter arived, and this time it *was* George.

This is what had hapened. (If you don't like explana-shuns, some don't, skip the next paragraph.)

G. Smith was envited by the Fiddlecombes every year, and when he didn't get the envitation this year, me getting it, I mean of corse when two years ago was this year, it then being, anyhow he wrote to young Fiddlecombe asking if he was going to be asked, and young Fiddlecombe wrote back asking how he cuold have axcepted if he hadn't been, and G. Smith wrote back asking what young Fiddlecombe ment, and young Fiddlecombe wrote back asking what G. Smith ment, but telling him to come along anyway. "Yes," the gentel reader may say, "but when *you* axcepted the envitation, why didn't Mrs. Fiddlecombe spot the diferent writing?" "Ah," I say, if he or she does, "that was becorse I replied on a tiewriter I'd been lent for twopence an hour, and as there were sixteen mistakes, why shuoldn't the J. of J. Smith of been a mistake, too?" I grant you the above is dull, but anyhow it's over now.

Well, it was a fair pickle, becorse the house was as packed as a tin of sardines, and now where was I to sleep? A lot of poeple came into the hall wile we were wracking our brains, encluding three Miss Fiddlecombes, and one of them said,

"Let him sleep in my room."

"Oh, no," I said.

"I wuoldn't be there," she said.

"Oh, I see," I said.

"But where wuold you be?" said Mrs. Fiddlecombe.

"What about the second bathroom?" said Miss Fiddlecombe.

"We're putting Monty in that," said Mrs. Fiddlecombe.

"There's the Haunted Chaimber," said Mr. Fiddlecombe.

"No, thank you," said Miss Fiddlecombe.

Perhaps I ouht to menshun she was rather pretty, so you will know wich she was of the three.

* It did me. *Author.*

* Wuold that I had! *Author.*

"Is there a Haunted Chaimber?" said a man whose name I found out afterwords was Morhouse or Morhen, I keap on forgetting wich, not that it matters.

"There must be, or she cuoldn't sleap in it," I said.

"Are you being funny?" said Morhouse or Morhen.

"It's possible," I said. "I never know."

"What do you mean?" he said.

"What I said," I said.

"Anyhow, she isn't going to sleap in it," said Miss Fiddlecombe, smiling with those teeth of hers, as they say on the wireless.

"Somebody's got to sleap in it, dear," said Mrs. Fiddlecombe, "and I think perhaps you'd better."

Then Miss Fiddlecombe frowned with those lips of hers, but I said,

"No! If it's got to be her or me, I will."

Then they all clapt.

Of corse, I didn't want to, who wuold, but you cuoldn't let a girl do it, I mean cuold you? Anyway, when the clapping had stoped, I asked them to tell me what was suposed to haunt the room, thinking one might as well know, and young Fiddlecombe said, "There's no supose about it, it does."

"All right, what does?" I said.

"A Headless Man with green eyes," he said.

"How can a man without a head have eyes?" I said.

"If a man can be without a head, so can eyes be," he said.

"I see what you mean," I said.

Well, after that, they took me up to it.

Now you may have notised that very often things aren't what they are made out to be. Someone says, say, "I've grown a runner bean a mile long," and when you meashure it you find it's thirteen inches, or you meat a famous person, say, whose suposed to be what's called a sewpah-man to find that pepper makes him sneaze like anybody else.* Well, I hoped it wuold be the same with a Haunted Chaimber, but it wasn't. We went up creeking stairs that wowned inside a tower, and the door fairly groaned when we opened it, and

"Cobwebs dangled from the cealing
Giving you a funny fealing,"

and lo! in the corner was a four-poaster bed with places both above and below where things cuold hide till midnight brouht them out. In fact the room was exacktly what one hoped it wuoldn't be, even down to the candel. But of corse I had to pretend to like it, so I said, "This is very nice," and then they said they'd send up a maid to do the room, and left me to wash &c.

Now, though I didn't want the night to come, the gentel reader will, so I will get over the time between in the quickest way I can, wich seams to be as folows, i.e.:—

- (1) The maid came up, and I washed &c.
- (2) I went down to tea, mufins, toast, and three kinds of cake.
- (3) I helped Miss Fiddlecombe put up some holly, once sliding down a ladder on top of her, both saying we weren't hurt, but both being.
- (4) Morhouse or Morhen asked me if I'd ment to be rude to him, and I said I wasn't sure.
- (5) I felt rather unwell.
- (6) I helped Miss Fiddlecombe put up some miselto. She said I cuold call her Nancy.
- (7) A gongue sounded, and I washed &c.

* I have proved this. *Author.*

- (8) There was a tremendous dinner, the table fairly groaning as corse after corse came and went, but still fealing unwell, I cuold only eat (a) one plate of soup and (b) five ices.*
- (9) Morhouse or Morhen took me aside and asked me if I was right in my head. I said no one knew.
- (10) We sat round a blaizing fire and told ghost stories, at least, the others did.
- (11) Mrs. Fiddlecombe said I looked hot and wuoldn't I like to go to bed, and I said no.
- (12) A woman got up and sang, startelling us all with the loudness of her voice. I thort she was being funny, but then found she ment it.
- (13) Morhouse or Morhen did a card trick, but forgot how it went in the middle.
- (14) A thin girl did a dance.
- (15) G. Smith stood on his head, keaping up, or down rather, for 2 mins. 31½ secs. It was jolly good.
- (16) Miss N. Fiddlecombe asked me if I cuoldn't do something, and I resited "To Be Or Not To Be." They were surprized.
- (17) Leamonade and cake. I didn't have any.
- (18) Morhouse or Morhen took me aside again and said, "Do you know what I think, I think you ouht to see a doctor." I told him I'd seen several.
- (19) Miss N. Fiddlecombe asked me if I was sure I didn't mind sleaping in the Haunted Chaimber, and I said, "Why, is there anywhere else?" and she said, "No," and I said, "Well, why shuold I

* The record is seventeen. I hold it. *Author.*



CHURCHILL.

"Eugh-ugh! Eugh-ugh!"

mind?" and then she said, "I liked your resitation," and I said, "No, did you?" and we went on like that for a bit.

(20) A log fell out and made us all jump.

(21) Came the night.

Well, here it was, and now there was no getting away from it. A few momints later I had said good-night to everybody, that is to most, of corse encluding Miss N. Fiddlecombe, and I was not only in the Haunted Chaimber, I was in bed. "Wasn't that quick?" you may ask. "You bet it was," I reply, if you do.

The auther wonders if the gentel reader has ever slept in a Haunted Chaimber? If he or she has, then he or she will know how at first you say, "Oh, nonsense," to everything, even wile you are gradually being turned into an ocean of persperation.

Comes a moan!

"Poo, the wind," you say.

Comes a creak!

"Immajination," you say.

Comes a scrapeing under the bed, like a person being grated!

"Tush, a mouse," you say.

Comes dripping.

"Ha, ha," you say.

Come footsteps outside the door.

"No, no," you say.

Yes, but when comes a flop against the door, and when the nob begins to turn, and when the door begins to open, and the candel you hapen to have kept alight flickers in the drauft—ah, then!

At first, though, it's a fact, I realy and truly didn't beleive it. I'd thort I wuold, but I didn't. Mind you, I was sweating like fifty-five horses, but I said, "Good, you're asleep," honestly meaning it. But when the door went on opening, an inch at a time, and the candel went on flickering,

"Making shadows leep and bound

Like deamons dancing round and round,"

I sudenly knew I wasn't asleep, but was as wide awake as you are now, and my pyjmas stuck to me like newly-paisted wallpaper. Of corse, there was always the hope that someone was playing a joke on me, and this might be young Fiddlecombe, or even Morhouse or Morhen. I'd seen them wispering together. I don't mean Morhouse and Morhen, but young Fiddlecombe and Morhouse or Morhen. But, no! It wasn't them, as the reader will know in a momint!

Second warning. If you feal yourself turning green, you had better not know. You had better stop here. This is where the boy I tried it on turned green. End of second warning.

When the door was about half open and I was getting ready to swoon, the drauft sudenly encreased, and lo! the candel went out!

Now it was pich dark, and you've got to beleive me when I say that my hair rose like thousands of sign-posts pointing to the cealing. I hadn't known that it cuold, but it did. And in this pich dark I knew the door was still going on opening. And then I got the most garstly fealing that I shuold think anyone *cuold* get. I felt as if a head came round the door and looked at me belonging to a man who hadn't got one. Nothing realy but neck, if you get what I mean, or even if you don't.

For what seamed like ten milion years, as they say, and it's true, the head that wasn't there looked at me, till I almost felt I hadn't got a head myself. Then the man under it—under the head that wasn't there, don't forget, I can't help it if this makes you dizzy, what about me?—

anyhow I heard him leaving the door and coming towards the bed, with a sort of slythering step, but quite regular. Swosh—swosh—swosh—swosh. Like his boots were wet.

Honestly, if this is getting too much, do stop. You can, but I cuoldn't.

Now he was half-way across the room. Now three quarters of the way. Now seven-eighths. Now fifteen-sixteenths. And now *he was here!* I heard him breathing strait out of his neck. "My hat," I thort. I jest cuold. And then the moon came out of a clowd, and I *saw* him.

What does the reader, if there still is one, think it was I saw? Young Fiddlecombe dressed up? Morhouse or Morhen in a sheet? No. What I saw was what it was. A headless man.

Why I didn't swoon I don't know. I tried to, but it wuoldn't come. Here he stood, looking at me without his head, and here was I, looking back at the place where it ouht to have been. Talk about garstly! But presently I got a fealing that he was as surprized as I was, and then an extrordinary thing hapened. I found I cuold think of him as well as me. I don't know if you know what I mean, but if it was garstly to *see* him, how much more garstly it must be to *be* him! So I said,

"Bad luck."

It didn't come out the first time, but it did the second. Of corse he didn't reply. He hadn't anything to reply with. "This must be jolly rotten for you," I then said.

He hadn't got anything to hear with, eigther, but I got a funny fealing that he heard.

"I don't supose there's anything I can do for you?" I said.

And now hapened the most extrordinary thing of all, and if you don't beleive it you neadn't, I won't mind, but he put out his hand, and I put out mine, and we shook, and then he turned round and went out of the room, closing the door after him. And, lo! he was gone!

Well, somehow I knew he wuoldn't come again, and I went off to sleep, and when they asked me next morning how I'd slept I said like a top. I didn't tell them becorse they wuoldn't of beleived me any more than I expect you do, but later on I did tell Miss N. Fiddlecombe, she being a bit diferent, and I also told her a funny fealing I had that the Haunted Chaimber wuoldn't be haunted any more.

"I don't beleive it will," she said. "I beleive you've exercised our ghost."

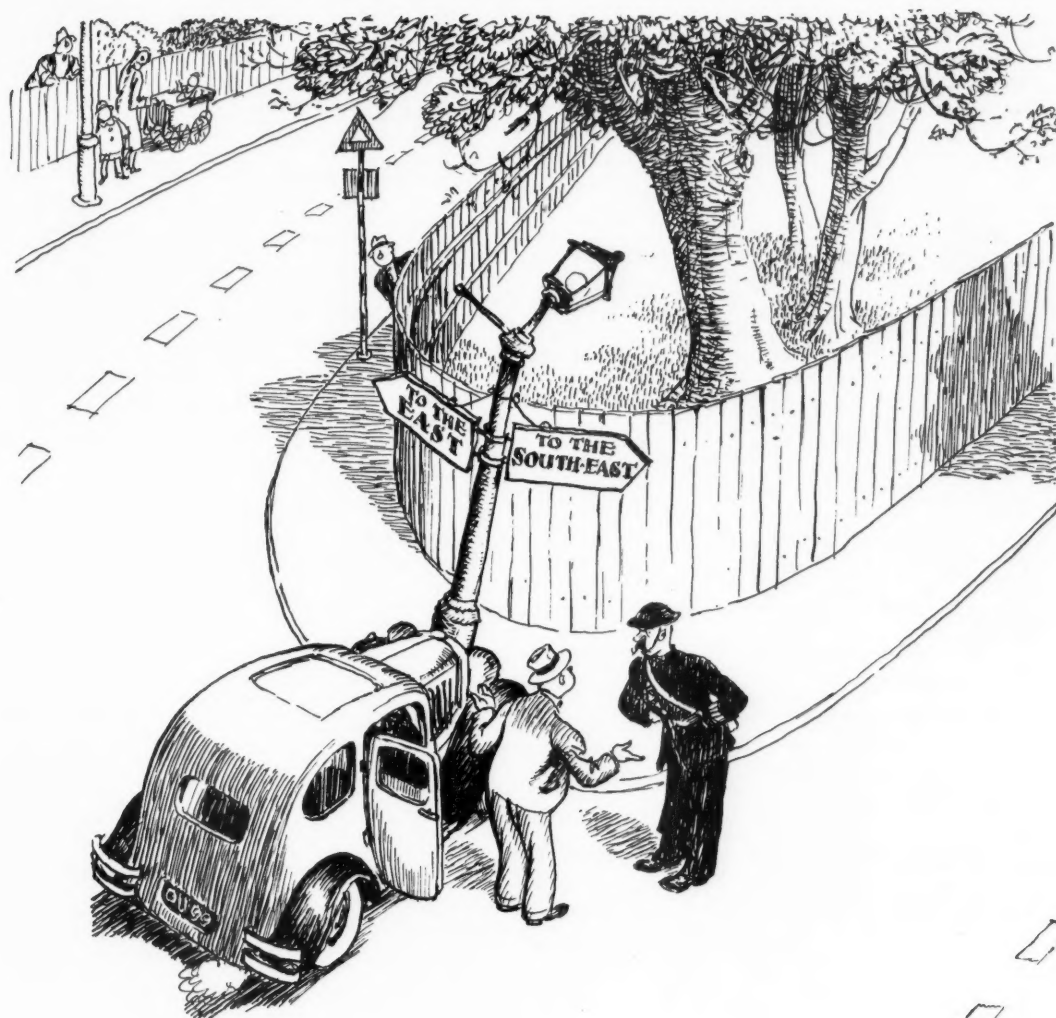
"Well, he did have a walk," I said.

Note. I've jest remembered wich it is. Morhouse.

Gift

THE rich man gives his gold in fullest measure,
The young romantic his bright flag of glory,
The writer gives his vision, verse or story,
The dilettante from his lovely treasure;
A forfeit eventide of quiet leisure—
This from the veteran in toil grown hoary;
From the boy a rôle bold, bird-like, migratory,
A swift surrendering of youth and pleasure.

And we, the humble, poor in purse, ungifted,
We too have offering to the land that bore us;
Shoulder to shoulder standing, hearts uplifted,
A living defence though hell itself rage o'er us;
None can possess this land till we be shifted,
And we stand steadfast as our fathers before us.



WILSON

"You see the trouble is I want to go East-South-East."



Miss White as seen by Mr. Averageman



Miss White as seen by little Willie Green



Miss White as seen by Miss Black



Miss White as seen by Mr. Brown about to visit his dentist

SIGES

Week-End Leave

SAPPER Turner had heard that Sapper Symphon was a sort of author in private life, and the other day he approached him.

"I wonder," he said, "if you would do me a favour?"

"Certainly," said Sapper Symphon, with a mixture of old-world courtesy and Army caution, "so long as it isn't cigarettes. I have only two, and I shall need them to get up with in the morning. I use one to give me the energy to get from under the blankets, and another to dress myself."

"It's not cigarettes," said Sapper Turner, "only a letter I want writing, to the O.C."

"The O.C.?" said Symphon dubiously. On some matters Symphon and the O.C. do not see eye to eye, both of them thinking they can run the Company better than the other.

"Yes," said Sapper Turner, "it's about my leave. I could have had a week-end leave a fortnight ago but I forwent it because I thought, if I have it a fortnight later it can be tacked on my seven days and make nine. Is that clear?"

"Yes," said Sapper Symphon, making notes on the back of a notice-board marked SGTS. AND W.O.S ONLY against which he was leaning.

"Well, I told Sergeant Tent about this at the time, and he said he thought it would be O.K. if I could fix up to swop my week-end a fortnight ago with Sapper Bidmead, who was due to go this coming week-end. You see?"

"Yes," said Symphon.

"Then Sapper Purver got scarlet fever, at least they thought it was, and that upset the whole kettle of fish."

"Sapper Purver?" echoed Symphon, distinctly shaken at the sudden introduction of a new recruit to the *dramatis personæ*.

"Sapper Bidmead was in Sapper Purver's tent," explained Turner patiently, "and so of course until they discovered it wasn't scarlet fever but a sandwich he bought in the town, nobody could leave that part of the camp, so Bidmead exchanged his week-end with Sapper Caswell, who was going this coming week-end, same as I want to go, but Sapper Caswell was put on cookhouse at the last moment, and couldn't go."

"Bad luck," said Sapper Symphon thoughtfully. The back of the notice-board was almost covered with notes by this time, and he had made a sort of genealogical table, such as they have for the Kings of England in history

books, showing the gradual descent of Sapper Turner's leave.

"So naturally Caswell had to act quickly, and he rushed round the camp trying to find somebody who wanted to go on leave and would exchange for a later date. It was at this point that things began to get sort of complicated."

Sapper Symphon threw his pencil away.

"Yes," continued Sapper Turner. "You know that our camp joins on to the 173 Company Camp at the far end beyond officers' ablutions? Well, Caswell must have wandered into the 173 lines by mistake, and there he found a man with a red face and one tooth missing, who said his name was either Snoop or Rachet, who was delighted to make the exchange, thinking that Caswell was also in 173. But of course when he went to 173 Company Office to get the thing officially confirmed they had never heard of Caswell, and this man Snoop or Rachet thought it must have been a dream. Wish-fulfilment and all that, you know. Then he met Caswell yesterday in the barber's shop in the town, sitting in the next chair, and nearly had a fit when he saw him in the glass, like a ghost. So of course Caswell claims this week-end, and so does Bidmead, and so do I, and only two of us can go; so I think the only fair thing is to put everything clearly and concisely before the O.C. for him to decide. If you'll just write down what I've told you it will be doing me a good turn."

Symphon obliged, although it gave him a headache for two days afterwards. Unfortunately the letter gave the O.C. a headache as well, and in a fit of pique he arranged a Gas Exercise for Sunday afternoon and cancelled all leave for that particular week-end.

o o

Obstruction

THE Platoon Commander posted me fifty yards below a bend in the lane. "You are a road-block," he said.

"How do you mean, 'road-block'?" I asked.

He looked as if he thought me a little dense.

"Blocking the road," he explained.

"I know," I said. "I grasped that at once. But am I concrete cones, or *chevaux-de-frise*, or concertina wire—or just a platoon of men?"

"All of them, if you like," he said, "so long as you block the road."

"Oh, I see," I said. "Stopping cars, you mean?"

He was shocked. "Good heavens, no!" he cried. "You mustn't interfere with the traffic!"

"Then how do I block the road?" I asked.

"You don't block it," he said. "You are just a road-block."

He went away. Half an hour later he returned, together with the Company Commander, to whom he exhibited me. "Road-block, here," he explained. The Company Commander moved me twenty yards further from the bend. The lane was narrow there, and after considering the matter carefully he said I had better stand on the bank. "Otherwise," he said, "you'll block the road."

They went away. After another hour they reappeared, escorting the Colonel. He looked at me and said sharply, "What's this? Surely you know that sentries should always be posted in pairs?"

The Platoon Commander, turning a pretty pink, explained that I was a whole platoon. The Company Commander murmured something about wire. Not to be outdone, I mentioned concrete cones. "I'm a road-block, Sir," I said proudly. "Ah," said the Colonel, "blocking the road, eh?"

He sent me back to the middle of the lane. Then he moved me twenty yards, back to my first position. He climbed on to the bank to consider the problem and advanced me ten yards further. "Anything coming round the bend wouldn't see him there till too late," he said. "That's where you want the block."

As he spoke, a fast car turned the bend and I jumped on to the bank, just in time. The car screeched and skidded, and stopped broadside on, with one wheel in the ditch.

The Colonel, with proper military superiority, wasted no sympathy on the driver. "Tcha!" he said. "A confounded nuisance. That car has blocked the road."

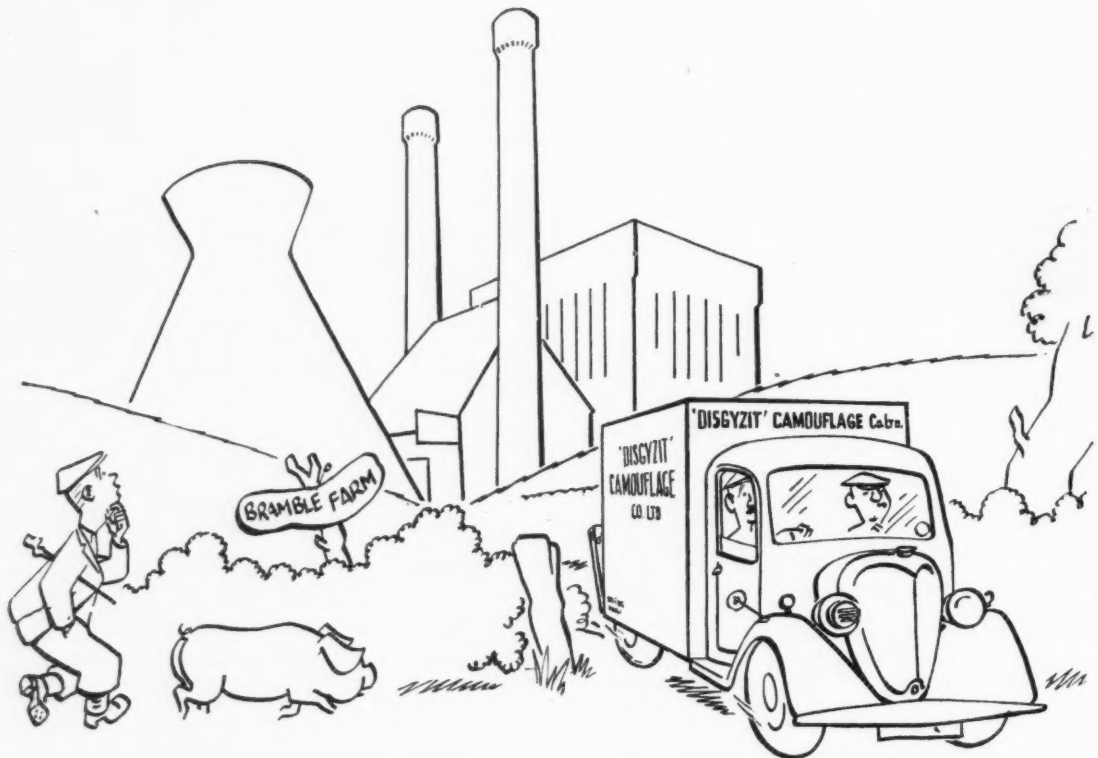
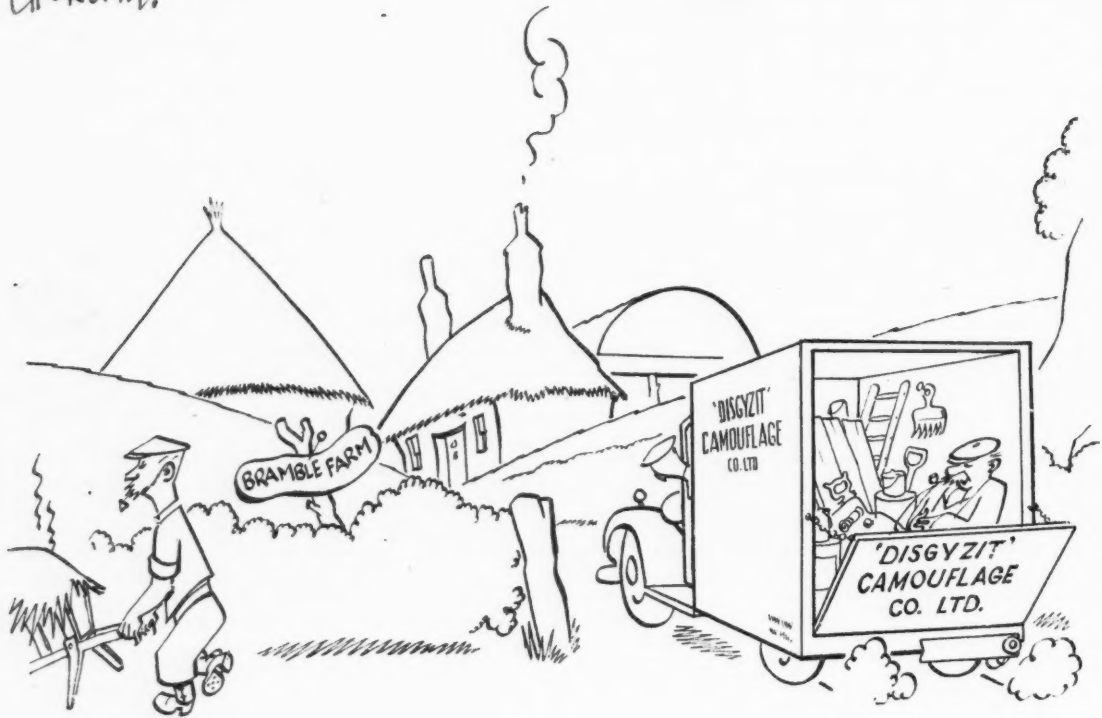
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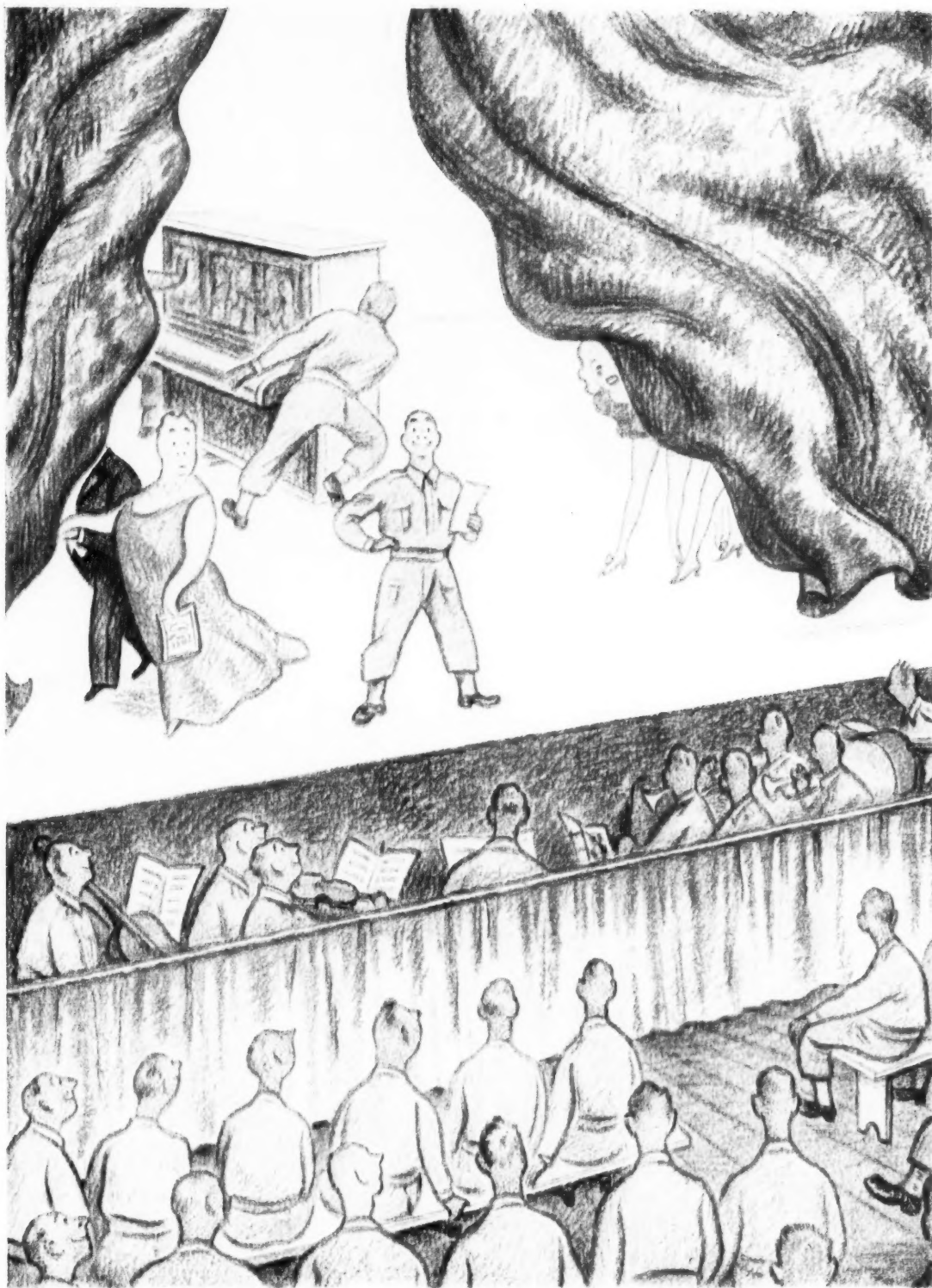
Song from a Basement

Raider Passes

THE year's at the fall,
The day's at the eve,
Warning's at seven,
The curtain's unfurled,
The pump's in the hall,
The guest has to leave,
Nazis in heaven—
All's wrong with the world!

CHURCH.



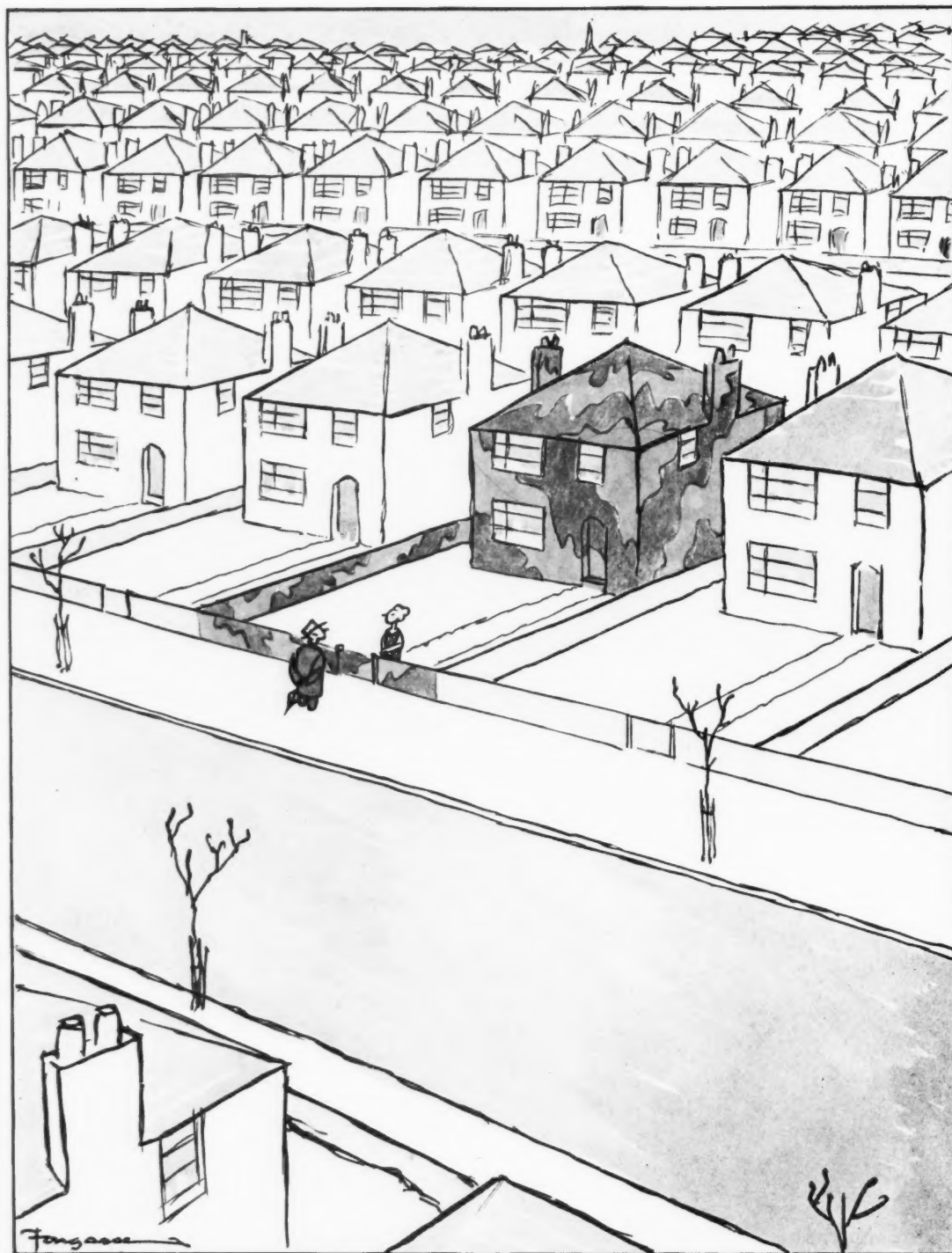


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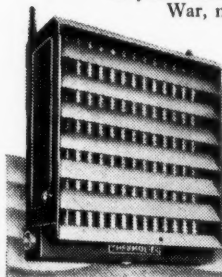
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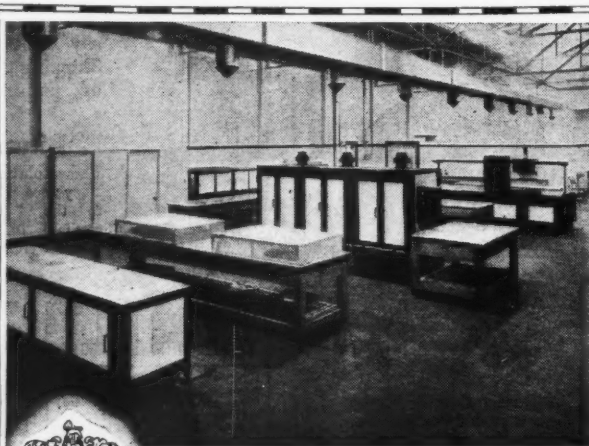
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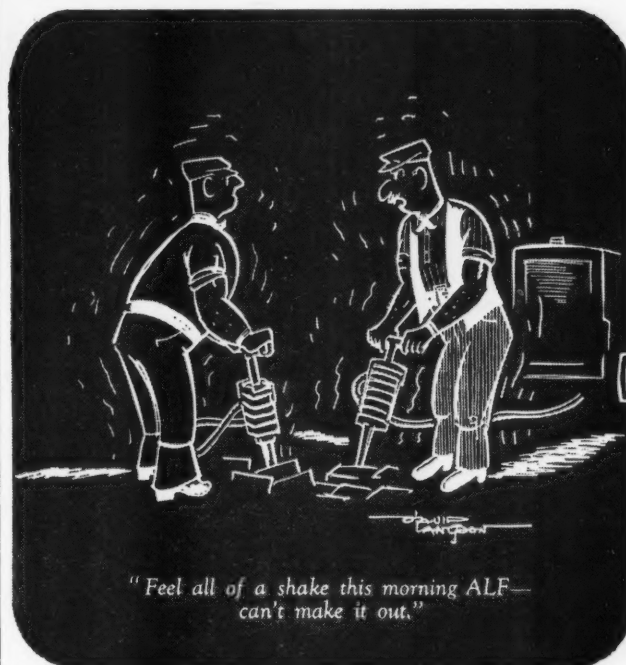
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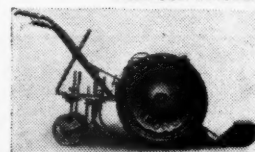
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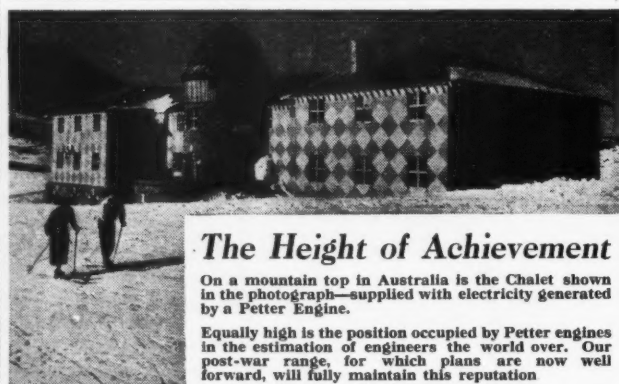
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